

Four Generations
of our
Royal Family

Also by Angus Holden (Lord Holden)

Elegant Modes in The Nineteenth Century

**Uncle Leopold. A Life of the first King of the
Belgians**

With Ralph Dutton

**English Country Houses Open to the Public
(Second Edition)**

French Chateaux Open to the Public



H.M. KING GEORGE VI. AGED TWO YEARS, 1897

Four Generations
of our
Royal Family

by
Lord Holden

WITH 32 PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM 1861 TO 1896
FROM THE COLLECTION OF
MESSRS. W. & D. DOWNEY

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TO
I. A.
and
A. A.
from
A. H.

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P R E F A C E

I HAVE not been so bold as to include all Queen Victoria's English descendants in this light survey of royal circles during the mid- and late-Victorian era. Rather have I selected, admittedly on an arbitrary basis, representatives of different generations of her family, augmenting them, for the sake of variety, with such close relatives of the Queen as King George V. of Hanover and King Leopold II. of the Belgians.

Apart from the valued and essential assistance of those authors whose works form my bibliography, I am primarily indebted to my cousin, Leonard Bower, not only for his kindness in reading my proofs, but also for expert advice while writing this book in his country home.

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Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER ONE

“Brown on the Box.”

A frequent reference made by Queen Victoria to her favourite gillie, John Brown, in *More Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*

ALTHOUGH “much saddened by dear Mama’s death,” Queen Victoria received her first grandchild at Osborne, in the summer of 1861, with profound satisfaction. Prince William of Prussia, now the ex-Emperor of Germany, was the son of her eldest daughter, the Princess Royal, and he had been born two years previously at Potsdam, when his grandmother was only thirty-nine and his mother eighteen.

Three years later, the Prince paid another visit to Osborne under painfully changed conditions for his grandmother since, on December 14., 1861, she had suffered irreparable loss in the death of the Prince Consort and she was now living in a melancholy retreat, which must have been most dispiriting for a child of five. However, Prince William showed early signs of a tactful attitude

towards the Queen, which his later behaviour was sadly to belie, since she wrote in her Journal during his July visit to Osborne; “. . . the dear child remembers his dear *Grandpapa!* . . .” And eighteen months later on January 27., 1866, on the occasion of her grandson’s seventh birthday, she wrote of her bright hopes for his future: “Dear William’s birthday . . . may he grow up good, clever and liberal-minded in his views, worthy of his beloved grandpapa, who was so anxious . . . he should not grow up into a ‘Conceited Prussian.’ ”

As Osborne House in the Isle of Wight, where Prince William was to pay in the future so many dutiful visits, few of which were to prove so enjoyable for his grandmother as those he paid as a child, the Queen spent several months of each year. Six weeks in midsummer and two months at Christmas were her official terms of residence, but these she was wont to extend on any adequate pretext, disliking the publicity of London and Windsor where her subjects could embarrass her by loyal ovations and where she was in easy reach of an unwelcome visit from Mr. Gladstone whenever, as was far too frequently the case, he happened to be the first Minister of the Crown. Southampton Water was a valuable protection against such importunities.

To Osborne House itself the Queen was much attached, which was only natural, considering it had been designed by the Prince Consort himself



"ODIOUS PEOPLE THE PRUSSIANS ARE, THAT I MUST SAY"

*Queen Victoria to King Leopold I
August 1865*

QUEEN VICTORIA AND PRINCE WILLIAM OF PRUSSIA (EX-EMPEROR WILLIAM II
OF GERMANY) IN 1861

with the able assistance of Mr. Thomas Cubitt. Old Osborne House, together with an estate of one thousand acres, had been purchased by the Queen in 1845 from Lady Isabella Blachford, and before the end of the 'forties, the present gaunt edifice in the pseudo-Palladian style had taken the place of a delightful eighteenth-century country mansion. When not in residence at Osborne, the Queen only enjoyed comparative happiness, during her early widowhood, at Balmoral, her Scottish home which formed the favourite and most personal background of her life.

Balmoral, like Osborne, had intimate connections with the Prince Consort, since not only was he largely responsible for the design of the Castle, assisted admittedly by the expert knowledge of Mr. William Smith, an architect from Aberdeen, but also he had actually bought the estate himself in 1852 for £31,500 from the trustees of the Duke of Fife. But besides the sentimental associations with her dead husband, Balmoral was to provide the Queen with an unexpected and indeed remarkable outlet for her emotions, in the deep interest and affection which she grew to entertain for her gillie, John Brown. But before describing the course of this singular friendship, it may be instructive to trace the Queen's earlier life at Balmoral.

She went there with Prince Albert in the summer of 1848, leasing the house for the

season, on the recommendation of her doctor, Sir James Clark. They were both enchanted by the remoteness and beauty of their surroundings and continued to take Balmoral every August for the next four years. Here Prince Albert learnt to stalk, to drink whisky, and to wear a kilt, while the Queen delighted to ride in the hills on her pony "Sultan," armed with her sketch-book and binoculars, to make sudden visits on astonished cottagers and occasionally, with a small party, to go off on long expeditions, with the extra excitement of staying in uncomfortable inns under assumed names. She also found time to keep an extensive diary, filled with particulars of these delicious pursuits, often embellished with a primitive sketch.

The activities of the Prince Consort naturally had pride of place in her diary, but to her eldest daughter Victoria, the Princess Royal, referred to throughout as "Vicky," allusion is often made. Thus, in October, 1852, the Queen wrote: ". . . poor Vicky, unfortunately, seated herself on a wasp's nest, and was much stung. Donald Steward (a gillie) rescued her, for I could not, being myself too much alarmed. Albert joined us in twenty minutes, unaware of having killed the stag. What a delightful day!"

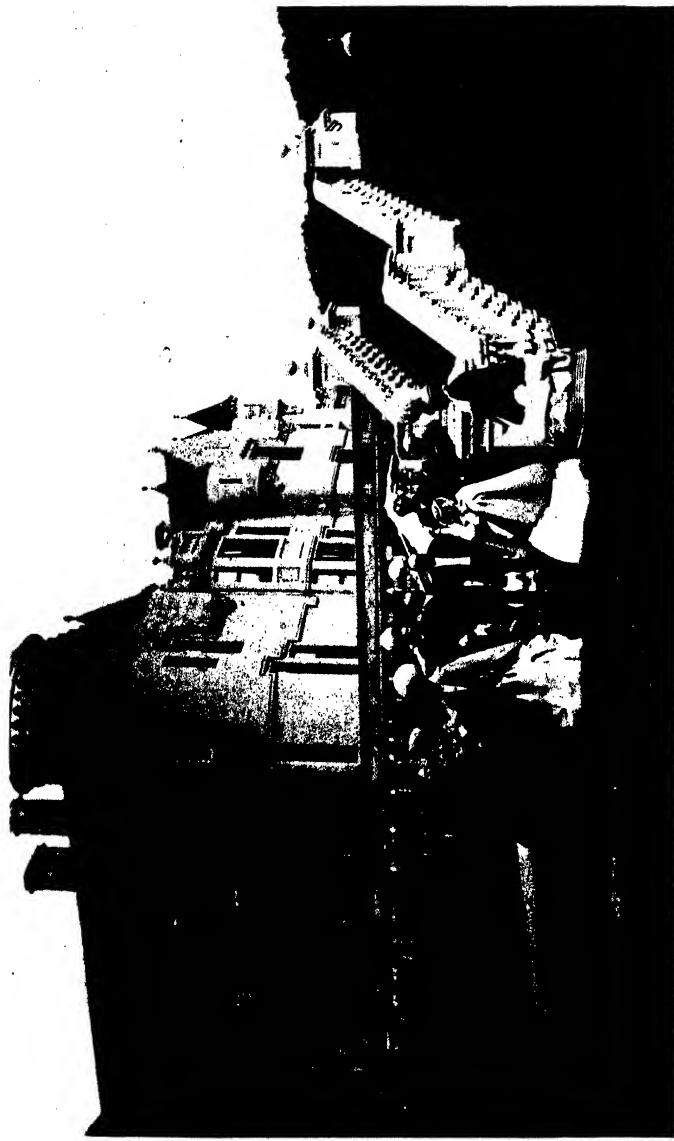
That year was the last spent at Balmoral as tenants and, on purchasing the estate, it was at once decided to pull down the old house owing to the lack of adequate accommodation and, on

September 28., 1853, the Queen laid the foundation stone of her new home in the Highlands. The ceremony was impressive. First the Queen struck the foundation stone with a silver-gilt mallet, declaring it to be "well and truly laid," after which she took up an ornate china cornucopia and poured wine and oil over the stone. The pipes then played and Her Majesty and the Royal Family retired. Two years later, owing to the energy of Prince Albert and Mr. Smith, the building of the new castle was sufficiently advanced to allow the Sovereign to take up her residence in the early autumn.

Queen Victoria was intensely proud of her new home, and both its exterior and interior prospects amply fulfilled her expectations. The former, owing to the Castle having been built in a local granite of unusual whiteness, presented a dazzling appearance to the visitor, who might have been forgiven for presuming that this amorphous specimen of the "baronial style" had been built of Carrara marble. The interior decoration lived up to the example set by the singular exterior. The woodwork throughout was of varnished pitch pine and the walls were hung with prints by Sir Edwin Landseer, interlarded with Highland weapons and "heads." But it was of the carpets and curtains that the Queen was especially proud. These were exclusively carried out in the gaudy "Royal Stuart" or, in the less exuberant, "Hunting Stuart" tartans.

The first visit paid by the Queen and the Prince Consort to the new Balmoral was marked by two auspicious events. On September 8., 1855, actually the day after the Royal Family had gone into residence, Sebastopol fell, after a siege lasting more than a year. This victory was celebrated by Albert in a wild and extravagant manner for such a sober and retiring Prince. According to his own account, he joined round the bonfire with the excited gillies "in a veritable witch's dance, supported by whiskey." The second happy event was of a more domestic character. The Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia, known in his family as "Fritz," at that time on a visit to Balmoral, "finding Vicky so *allerliebste*," in the Queen's words, "could delay no longer in making this proposal." His offer of matrimony to the Princess Royal was made in romantic circumstances and in a delicate manner: ". . . during our ride up Craig-Na-Ban this afternoon," wrote the Queen in her Journal, "he picked a piece of white heather (the emblem of 'good luck') which he gave her; and this enabled him to make an allusion to his hopes and wishes . . . which led to this happy conclusion."

The Queen was permitted six more idyllic summers at Balmoral before the tragic death of the Prince Consort, but this overwhelming sorrow only caused her to love her Scottish home more dearly, since each room in the house, each garden path, each burn and loch, each hill



"WE FOUND THE TOWER FINISHED, AS WELL AS THE OFFICES AND THE POOR
OLD HOUSE GONE"

Queen Victoria in her Highland Journal
August 1856

HOUSE PARTY AT BALMORAL. C. 1865

and valley was so full of memories of her "Beloved Angel."

Eight months after his death, the Queen, on August 21., 1862, laid the first stone of a Memorial Cairn to the Prince Consort on the top of Craig Laurachen, a hill behind the village of Crathie. On this melancholy occasion, "my poor six orphans" (the three youngest being considered too immature to participate), each placed, in precedence of age, a stone to form the foundation of the cairn, marked with the appropriate initial. The cairn, which was built thirty-five feet high, was inscribed with the words: "Albert, the Great and Good Prince Consort," and there followed two verses from the Wisdom of Solomon, selected by the Princess Royal, which began: "He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: For His Soul pleased the Lord . . ." The Queen was severely criticized by some organs of the Scottish Press for allowing the epitaph to Prince Albert to be taken from the Apocrypha rather than from the Bible, but nobody drew attention to the audacious assumption of perfection which the text chosen seemed to imply.

On this scene of crape and cairns there appeared in the early 'sixties the stalwart and hirsute figure of a gillie, John Brown. It would seem from what is known of his character and from his physical attributes—which fortunately the camera has recorded for posterity—that Brown was a

typical specimen of the Highlander of his class, and it was, no doubt, as such that he appealed to the Queen. Consciously, she liked his face and figure, his attention and sympathy, his dour and simple manner of speech, and above all, his dog-like devotion to the person of his Sovereign. Unconsciously, she was stimulated by the control he had assumed, almost as a right, over the practical side of her daily existence in the highlands; a control demanded by her dependent feminine instinct and which had been sadly lacking in her life since the death of the Prince Consort. In addition, Brown in his youth, had been one of her husband's gillies, which greatly enhanced his sentimental value in the eyes of the Queen.

The liberties taken by John Brown with his Mistress have certainly gained in colour by frequent repetition, but the salacious deductions drawn from them by certain foreign writers only serve to expose their ignorance of the Queen's character. It has remained, however, a source of perennial astonishment that Queen Victoria, whose rebukes to her erring children and subjects have passed into history, and whose personality was so awe-inspiring that even Bismarck felt nervous in her presence, can have accepted, not only with equanimity but also with pleasure, the familiarities practised by this boorish Scot.

Always peremptory in his manner and often rude, Brown, at least on one occasion, even went

so far as to tell the Queen that he disapproved of the clothes she was wearing. Perhaps this exhibition of impudence may have inspired his Mistress to write to her uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians, that Brown "combined the offices of groom, footman, page and maid, I might almost say, as he is so handy about cloaks and shawls." Sharing with many of his fellow countrymen an amiable weakness for whisky, Brown when tipsy, was often extremely insolent to distinguished visitors at Balmoral, knowing they would receive no redress from the Queen, and was wont to pat Ministers of the Crown on the back. The vision of Mr. Gladstone enduring this endearment from John Brown must, however, have amply compensated his fellow guests.

After the Prince Consort's death, Brown passed into the service of the Queen and, two years later, his name began to assume considerable prominence in her Highland Journal. Such phrases as "Brown on the box" or "Brown in full dress on the rumble" (of the Queen's carriage), seem to suffer from unnecessary repetition, considering he was always in attendance on the Queen. She even found it essential, in February, 1865, to inform her aged uncle, King Leopold, of her domestic arrangements concerning John Brown. ". . . have now appointed that *excellent* Highland servant of mine to attend me ALWAYS and everywhere out of doors," she wrote, ". . . it is a *real* comfort, for he is *so* devoted to me so

simple, so intelligent, *so unlike* an *ordinary* servant, and so cheerful and attentive . . .” As “Uncle Leopold” was now seventy-five and actually in the last year of his life, it is improbable that he was much interested in these rhapsodies on a gillie.

Two years previously, her “poor Good Brown” had proved himself of practical value during an accident which might have had serious consequences for the Queen. In October, 1863, attended by her daughters the Princesses Alice and Helena, the Queen set out for an expedition into the hills, driving in a “Sociable,” an open four-wheeled conveyance, invented in 1794, with two seats facing each other and two seats on the box. Their only attendants were the coachman Smith, Brown, as a matter of course, and a black serving-boy called “Willem,” belonging to Princess Alice, who seems a curious eighteenth-century importation amongst those tartan-clad mid-Victorian ladies.

It had proved a most enjoyable day, but the return journey was made in the dark and the coachman, during a long descent, lost control of his horses, with the result that, after a great deal of bumping and swaying, the royal party found itself precipitated from the “Sociable” onto the road. The Queen came down hard, bruising her nose and thumb while Brown, according to her account of the accident, “called out in despair, ‘The Lord Almighty have mercy on us! Who did



" . . . HE IS SO DEVOTED TO ME . . . "

*Queen Victoria to King Leopold
February 1865*

QUEEN VICTORIA, PRINCESS LOUISE (DUCHESS OF ARGYLL)
AND JOHN BROWN. C. 1868

ever see the like of this before! I thought you were all killed!’ ” Brown’s consternation was fortunately unwarranted since the Princesses were even less hurt than their mother, although their dresses were torn and some difficulty was experienced in disentangling them from the wreck. Then, with philosophic calm, the royal party sat down in the over-turned “Sociable,” using the bottom of the carriage for a back, and waited for assistance to arrive. Meanwhile the Queen was diverted by the sight of “little Willem . . . with the hood of his ‘burnous’ over his head, holding a lantern,” and encouraged by the activities of John Brown, “holding another, and being indefatigable in his attention and care.” It was to be feared that the accident was due to Smith’s inebriated condition, since the Queen recorded in her Journal that “the road was as broad and plain as possible.” So the following year the irresponsible coachman received his pension and retired from the royal service.

The Queen’s concern for Brown’s health and comfort was constantly shown in her Highland Journal. One day after a long expedition in the rain she wrote: “Was much distressed at breakfast to find that poor Brown’s legs had been dreadfully cut by the edge of his wet kilt. . . . Just at the back of the knee . . .” Some years later, Brown’s legs were again the objects of the Queen’s solicitude. While accompanying her on an inspection of H.M.S. *Thunderer*, Brown’s zeal had

caused him to fall through an open space in one of the gun-turrets and to bruise his shins severely. Although a fortnight later, at Balmoral, he was again at his post on the rumble of the Queen's landau, she was much worried by his condition and wrote in her Journal, "he looks pulled."

The comfort and position of Brown's bedroom, whether at Balmoral or elsewhere, always appeared to concern the Queen. Staying in the 'seventies at the Loch Maree Hotel she wrote: "To the left Beatrice's* [room] and Brown's just opposite to the right . . . at the other end is my bedroom. . . ." On returning to Balmoral a few days later, the Queen noted a rearrangement of bedrooms: "Beatrice's room is a very pretty one, but very hot, being over the kitchen. Brown's, just opposite, also very nice and not hot, but smaller." Again, when staying with Lord Haddington at Broxmouth in 1878, the Queen wrote: "My bedroom is just over the sitting-room . . . beyond Beatrice's. . . . Just outside the corridor, Brown's."

Five days later, after returning to Balmoral from this visit, the Queen celebrated with appropriate devotion the fifty-ninth anniversary of the Prince Consort's birthday. It was always her custom on these melancholy occasions to give presents to those with whom she was intimate, so before breakfast on August 26th.: ". . . I gave Beatrice a mounted enamelled photograph

* H.R.H. Princess Beatrice, the Queen's youngest child.

of my dear Mausoleum, and a silver belt of Montenegrin workmanship." After breakfast the Queen experienced a further pleasure: "I gave my faithful Brown an oxidized silver biscuit-box. . . . Tears came to his eyes, and he said, 'It is too much.' " She commented thus on Brown's humble attitude: "God knows, it is not . . ."

The Queen received a severe shock when it was brought to her notice, in 1867, that criticism and even ridicule was being directed against her invaluable and beloved *bonne à tout faire*. She herself, at this time, was undergoing a period of widespread unpopularity amongst her subjects owing to the complete seclusion in which she lived, although the Prince Consort had been dead for nearly six years, and this resentment had been recently perceptibly increased by the publicity given in the Scottish Press to her relations with John Brown, whom the newspapers had dared to criticize for his supposed influence over the Queen. Her silent indignation at these outrageous attacks could be restrained no longer, when her advisers attempted to dissuade her from taking Brown, as her personal attendant, to a military review in Hyde Park. The Queen then gave vent to her feelings in a letter to her equerry Lord Charles FitzRoy on June 26th.: "She is much astonished and shocked at an attempt made by some people to prevent her faithful servant going with her to the *Review* . . . thereby making the poor, nervous, shaken Queen . . . terribly

nervous and uncomfortable." She concluded on a determined note. The Queen wished it to be "*Completely understood once and for all that her Upper Highland Servant belongs to her outdoor attendants on State as well as private occasions.*" Thus the Queen effectively silenced the apprehensions of her advisers and there is no doubt that had the review, indefinitely postponed owing to the murder of the Emperor of Mexico, taken place as arranged, John Brown would have been there.

The Queen's deep interest in her gillie was also extended to his family and when Brown's father died, in October, 1875, she was much grieved. She even insisted on watching the burial at a dignified distance from the graveside and later the Queen went to "soothe and comfort dear old Mrs. Brown and gave her a mourning brooch with a little bit of her husband's hair which had been cut off yesterday." This graceful action on her part also entailed participating in a ceremony doubtless founded on the Scotsman's ready ingenuity to find an excuse for a drink. "We took some whiskey and water and cheese," wrote the Queen, "according to the universal Highland Custom." A year later, Brown had the misfortune to lose his mother and, after he had been waiting on the Queen at a big dinner party at Balmoral, a few days later, she noted magnanimously in her Journal: "It was hard for him to appear on such a festive occasion . . . but

his sense of duty ever went before every feeling of self."

The Queen of England's exaggerated devotion to her gillie soon became common knowledge amongst the Courts of Europe and gave much malicious pleasure in those royal circles where England and her Queen were unpopular. In particular, the Empress Marie of Russia was most delighted by the gossip about John Brown and wrote to her brother that she had heard Queen Victoria was "afraid of Brown, who treats her like a small child and seems to regard her with a sort of condescension." In June of the same year, in referring to the Queen's support of Prince Alexander of Battenberg in his new position of Prince of Bulgaria, the Empress Marie wrote cynically to her brother: "It appears that Brown has deigned to approve of the new Bulgaria."

But certainly Queen Victoria's admiration and love was gallantly and gratefully rewarded by Brown. Impudent and drunken he was certainly at times, but he was also invaluable in every crisis, petty or important, which the Queen was called upon to face. As an example of the former, his Mistress recorded in her Journal in September 1873, how one afternoon on the moors she, her lady-in-waiting and Brown "were spied upon by imprudently inquisitive reporters," one of whom actually had the audacity to bring a telescope to bear upon the Queen. Naturally such

insolence could not be tolerated, so off went Brown to drive the intruders away. But the reporter with the telescope proved most recalcitrant and Brown was compelled to inform him that "the highest gentleman in *England* would not dare to do what he did, much less a reporter," and to add that "he must move on, or he would give him something more." "More strong words were used," reported the Queen, who was fortunately out of earshot, before Brown succeeded in clearing the moors of the Press.

Three days after this incident, on September 16th., Brown accompanied his Sovereign, her daughter, Princess Louise, and the lady-in-waiting, Lady Churchill, through Inverness on their way to stay with the Duke of Argyll at Inverary Castle. The Queen was delighted with her reception in Inverness, "where no sovereign had been since my poor ancestress Queen Mary" (the Queen was much prouder of her Stuart than of her Hanoverian blood), and the party arrived at Inverary in time for the tenants' ball. At this function Brown appears to have secured plenty of partners since his Mistress reported that "Louise danced a reel with Brown, and Beatrice with one of the Duke's foresters . . . another reel with pipes, in which Jane Churchill danced with Brown. . . ."

Protecting his Sovereign from the importunities of reporters was an easy and congenial task for Brown compared to his responsibilities on the

two occasions he was at the Queen's side, when her life appeared to be in danger. The first threat on her life occurred on February 29., 1872, two days after the thanksgiving service at St. Paul's Cathedral for the recovery from his grave illness of the Prince of Wales. The Queen, returning from her drive, had just reached the garden entrance to Buckingham Palace and Brown had got off the box to let down the steps, "when suddenly someone appeared at my side . . . someone unknown, peering above the carriage door, with an uplifted hand and a strange voice." The Queen then naïvely admitted the panic into which she was thrown by this apparition: "in a terrible fright, I threw myself over Jane C. [Lady Churchill], calling out 'Save me!'" Her alarm was short-lived, for a moment later, "I saw Brown holding a young man tightly." The assailant was an Irishman of seventeen called Arthur O'Connor. Although his pistol was unloaded and, according to Mr. Bruce, the Home Secretary, in a letter to the Queen, he was "weak-minded" and the "easy victim of delusion," the poor wretch was given the Cat for this mad but harmless escapade.

Ten years later, a much more serious attempt was made on the Queen's life when Brown was again at her side. She was leaving Windsor station for the Castle on March 2., 1882, when the sound of a sharp explosion was heard. The Queen was quite unperturbed and the Duchess of Roxburgh,

who was in her carriage, suggested that it was probably some foolish joke on the part of one of the Eton boys, who were lining the short route from the station to the Castle and were giving her, as usual, an enthusiastic welcome on her return to Windsor. But the incident proved to be far from a joke, since on arrival at the Castle, Brown, "when he opened the carriage, said, with a greatly perturbed face, though quite calm: 'That man fired at Your Majesty's carriage.' "

The Queen was astonished, as she had neither seen her would-be assassin nor connected the explosion she had heard with a shot from a pistol. However, after taking tea with Princess Beatrice, she telegraphed to all her children and relations informing them of her escape, in case they should have heard unfounded rumours to the contrary. While thus engaged, "Brown came in to say that the revolver had been found loaded, and one chamber discharged." Brown further informed his Mistress that her assailant had "a very bad countenance," although, curiously enough, he was "well-spoken and evidently an educated man." After he had fired at her carriage and before apprehension, the Queen was gratified to learn that, "an Eton boy had rushed up and beaten him with an umbrella."

This attempted assassination of Queen Victoria was to prove the last occasion on which Brown was to be at his Sovereign's side during an emergency, for a year later John Brown died. The

news of this crushing sorrow was brought to his mother by Prince Leopold on March 29., 1883. The Queen recorded the event in simple and touching words in her diary: "Leopold came to my dressing-room, and broke the dreadful news to me that my good, faithful Brown had passed away early this morning. Am terribly upset by this loss, which removes one who was so devoted and attached to my service and who did so much for my personal comfort. It is the loss not only of a servant, but of a real friend."

The Queen's distress on the death of her beloved Brown was not generally shared either in her family circle nor amongst her advisers, who had naturally resented the liberties which the gillie had taken with his Mistress, and who also regretted the opportunities of ridicule to which the Sovereign had laid herself open by her child-like devotion to John Brown. Mr. Gladstone, however, whatever his private opinions may have been, hastened to condole with the Queen. He first referred to the loss she had suffered "by a sudden and fatal illness, of the services of Mr. J. Brown," and concluded by remarking with considerable foresight that, "it would be too much to hope that anyone, however capable, can at once fill the void." It was a pity that Mr. Disraeli was not still alive on this occasion to write to his "Fairie Queene" a more flamboyant if less artless letter.

Mr. Gladstone, it would appear from history, was constitutionally incapable of ever pleasing

the Queen and, although her reactions to his tactful note on the death of Brown are unknown, it is probable that it would have been more acceptable, had his last sentence ended "can *ever* fill the void." And certainly such a prophecy would have been abundantly fulfilled, since John Brown was the last man to whom the Queen ever gave her complete trust and devotion. Indeed there were only four such lucky mortals in her life; Lord Melbourne, whom she had revered as a father, the Prince Consort, whom she had worshipped as a perfect being, Mr. Disraeli who, with his glistening web of flattery, had captured the proud heart of the lonely and susceptible widow and lastly, John Brown who, with his ingenuous assumption of masculine control, had dominated the feminine and dependent instincts of the Queen.

Nearly twenty years were to elapse between the death of John Brown and that of his Mistress, but no man or woman during that time ever penetrated into that Olympian aloofness which characterized the last two decades of her life. Not even Lord Salisbury, despite her admiration for him and her approval of his statesmanship, was ever privileged to enjoy personal intimacy with his Sovereign. In consequence, the death of John Brown may be said to end an epoch in her life, a fact apparently recognized by the Queen, judging by the various works with which she proposed to perpetuate his memory. Of these,

one was so singular, that ecclesiastical pressure was brought to bear to dissuade her from persevering in her unprecedented design. It was a curious story.

In 1868 there had been published the first volume of her book entitled, *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*. This had proved a best-seller, and brought in £4,016 6s. to the authoress, all of which was distributed in charity. Encouraged by this success, she prepared a second volume, due to appear in 1884, and the death of John Brown, in the previous year, put into her head the astonishing notion of writing yet a third volume of her *Scottish Journal*, dealing exclusively with the gillie and her life in his company in the Highlands. The Queen's decision caused consternation in Court circles, where it was realized that such a venture would inevitably cover her with ridicule, especially abroad, and the Dean of Windsor, Doctor Randall Davidson, later Archbishop of Canterbury, was urged to dissuade her from her alarming literary project.

So, not without grave misgivings, the Dean of Windsor wrote to the Queen a letter of considerable tact in which he suggested that a life of John Brown might prove injudicious, as some of her subjects had not shown themselves worthy of being admitted into further confidences about her private life. Despite the skilful wording, the Dean's misgivings proved not unfounded. No

answer was vouchsafed to this greatly daring letter and Doctor Davidson began to ponder on the propriety, and possible necessity, of resigning the Deanery of Windsor. Then one day, he met the Queen by chance. She was as gracious as ever, no reference was made to his letter, but a third volume of the "Leaves" was never written.

It is probable that Queen Victoria was as startled by the Dean's audacity in criticizing the subject-matter of her proposed literary output, as she was by the suggestion that it would be imprudent for her to write a life of John Brown. Nevertheless, she reluctantly accepted his advice and wisely contented herself with the following dedication in the second volume of *Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands* which was published in 1884: "To my loyal Highlanders and especially to the memory of my devoted personal attendant and faithful friend John Brown. . . ." At the end of this volume the Queen gave further expression to her abiding sorrow caused by his premature death: ". . . to say he is daily, nay, hourly, missed by me," she wrote, "is but a feeble expression of the truth."

It might have been supposed that these touching and magnanimous references to John Brown in her new book would have satisfied the Queen in her desire to perpetuate his memory. Such, however, was not to be the case. She caused to be inserted in the Court Circular a glowing

testimonial to his virtues, she ordered his statue to be erected at Balmoral and a granite seat, to his memory, to be placed in the gardens at Osborne House, and she commissioned Sir Edgar Boehm to work a statue of her beloved gillie, in solid gold.

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER TWO

"I may and have many faults—no one is more alive to them than I am."

THE PRINCE OF WALES TO LORD GRANVILLE

July 2., 1882

BESIDES her children, John Brown and the Highland scenery, the Queen at Balmoral, had a further outlet for her emotions in her pets. Frequent mention is made in her Journal of her two favourite ponies "Sultan" and "Fyvie," who alternately carried her, almost daily, on her rides in the hills, while her collie, "Sharp," is included in the group with Queen Victoria, Princess Louise and John Brown.

In the early 'sixties, animals were not so universally revered amongst all classes as they are to-day; a reverence engendered, in the first instance, by Sir Edwin Landseer who, by painting various animals with human expressions and in human circumstances, can at least claim the title of being an "original" artist. A cursory glance at the many prints of *Dignity and Impudence*, *The*

Monarch of the Glen, *Comical Dogs* (wearing glen-garries), and of that superb scene in a law-court, to be seen in the original at Chatsworth, in which the Judge and all concerned are dogs, clearly indicate the original nature of his style of painting. This humanizing of beasts had not only never been attempted by earlier artists, excluding the "Primitives," but also had the paradoxical result of persuading mid-Victorian ladies that, as Sir Edwin had shown with his brush, animals could be endowed with human characteristics, it was a manifest corollary that they must also possess souls. "Tray's" epitaph, lovingly stitched by many a young lady under a nondescript woolly dog, is evidence of this wide-spread belief:

"The good dog Tray is happy now,
He has no need to say Bow-wow."

Queen Victoria was probably born too early (1819), and anyhow, was far too sensible to harbour such illusions, but from stray remarks in her Journal and letters, it is clear that her attitude towards animals was typical of her age. Dogs which could do tricks were the favourites in mid-Victorian days. To carry a basket (popularized in contemporary porcelain), a stick, or a beaded purse, to "die for the Queen" and to beg with a lump of sugar perched on the tip of the nose, were laudable and endearing qualities, while the coarser duties of the dog lover, so popular to-day, such as frequent walks and con-

stant use of brush and towel, were relegated to the servants' hall.

The Queen appreciated any dog which could perform the simplest trick, and in September, 1873 she wrote enthusiastically in her Journal of "Noble," then a recent acquisition at Balmoral: "My favourite collie, Noble, is always downstairs when we take our meals, and was so good, Brown making him lie on a chair or couch, and he never attempted to come down without permission, and even held a piece of cake in his mouth without eating it, till told he might. He is the most 'biddable' dog I ever saw, and so affectionate and kind; if he thinks you are not pleased with him, he puts out his paws, and begs in such an affectionate way."

Although, as far as we know, "Sharp" was lacking in such engaging parlour-tricks, he was very popular with his Mistress. "Dear good Sharp was with us and out each day, and so affectionate," the Queen wrote in September, 1867 and during the same month two years later: ". . . good Sharp going out with us and having occasional 'Collie-shangies' (quarrels) with collies when he came near cottages." A few days later "Sharp" appears to have been in a less irresponsible mood: "Good Sharp was always in the dining-room," recorded the Queen in her Journal, "but remained quietly lying down." In reward for this docility, "Sharp's" effigy has been handed down to posterity and a life-size group of the

collie and his Mistress, in white marble, can be seen to-day in Windsor Castle.

The Queen's names for her dogs were delightfully ingenuous; "Noble" on psychical and "Sharp" on physical grounds, and her dachshund "Dako" and her spaniel "Dash," for equally obvious reasons. Of "Dako" his Mistress was particularly fond and, on his death in 1871, she wrote to the Princess of Wales saying: "I am greatly distressed at my dear old "Dako" having died. The dear old dog had such funny, amusing ways, with large, melancholy, expressive eyes." Then there was the pekinese, one of the first to arrive in this country, and given to the Queen after the loot of the Summer Palace in 1860. Naturally he was called "Lootie."

An exception to this simple rule of naming her dogs was the greyhound "Eos," but she had primarily been the pet of the Prince Consort, which accounted for her being called after the goddess of the dawn and the Mother of the Winds. "Eos" belonged to the pre-Balmoral period, but owing to the dog's connection with her husband, her life and character had lingered for many years in the Queen's memory. With particular clearness did she recollect that day in the autumn of 1842 when "Eos" had been "peppered" by her uncle, Prince Ferdinand, although it was never explained what rôle a greyhound could have played out shooting. Sympathy was wide for "Eos" after her accident and

King Leopold of the Belgians wrote soothingly of the misadventure which had befallen "dear Eos, a great friend of mine," and he added with heavy humour that Prince Ferdinand "ought rather to have shot somebody else of the family." But the greyhound's wounds were only skin-deep and when, in the following month, the Queen referred to her again in a letter to her uncle, King Leopold, "Eos" was suffering from indigestion. "Dear Eos is going on most favourably," wrote the Queen; "they attribute this sudden attack to over-eating (she steals whenever she can get anything); living in too warm rooms and getting too little exercise since she was in London. . . . She must be well-starved, poor thing, and not allowed to sleep in beds, as she generally does."

From this slight sketch of Queen Victoria's life at Balmoral during the twenty years following the Prince Consort's death, it will be readily appreciated that such a domestic and melancholy existence cannot have appealed to all members of the Royal Family and, in particular, not to the Prince of Wales. Although there was grouse-shooting and deer-stalking at Balmoral, neither of these sports were greatly encouraged by the Queen, after her husband's death, with the result that the gentlemen of the house party were condemned to many idle and monotonous days. But, although providing few amenities for her male guests, the Queen was adamant in her control of their mode of living. Under the influence of the

Prince Consort, the time allowed to the gentlemen for drinking port, before joining the ladies, had been limited to a quarter of an hour, since the Prince, in company with most foreigners, regarded this English custom as both boring and barbaric. This prudish injunction was strictly enforced during her widowhood, while late evenings in the smoking-room, after the ladies had retired to bed, were also forbidden by the Queen. This further regulation was announced in a concise letter to her equerry, Lord Charles FitzRoy in October, 1868. The smoking-room at Balmoral, she declared, was always to be closed at midnight, "someone coming to remind the Prince and gentlemen that the hour has come when the lights must be put out." As the Prince mentioned in this curt command was the Prince of Wales, he could not be blamed for finding life at Balmoral somewhat uncongenial. To be told at the age of twenty-seven that he, the host, and his friends were to be turned out of the smoking-room at midnight was unfair on the Prince and short-sighted of the Queen.

As a result of this rigorous maternal control, her continued seclusion and his mother's refusal to allow him any part in State affairs, there grew up, apart from the Queen's Court, a separate society called the "Marlborough House Set," which consisted of the friends and acquaintances of the Prince and Princess of Wales. In no sense was this set and its leaders political rivals of the

Queen, like each eldest son of the Hanoverian Kings had been of his father. Queen Victoria clung tenaciously to her power until she died, but she was unable to deprive her son of the consolations of that fashionable and cosmopolitan society, which she herself despised. Before describing the "Marlborough House Set" and the Prince and Princess of Wales, it may be interesting to consider this historic house, after which the "set" was named.

Begun in 1709, on ground granted by the Crown as the London residence of the first Duke of Marlborough, this fine red-brick house is one of the few examples of the domestic architecture of Sir Christopher Wren. Originally built in two storeys, a third was added in the middle of the eighteenth century, while in 1817 the fifth Duke of Marlborough, owing to his extravagant tastes, was forced to surrender the remainder of his lease to the Crown. In the same year Marlborough House was fitted up for the residence of Princess Charlotte, only child of King George IV. and heiress to the throne, on her marriage to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and on the death of that Princess, in the following year, the house was retained by Prince Leopold until he became the first King of the Belgians in 1831.

On the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837, Marlborough House became the home of the Dowager Queen Adelaide, who considerably

damaged the interior by tasteless alterations, which included the plastering over of Laguerre's magnificent wall paintings, depicting the triumphs of the first Duke of Marlborough over Louis XIV. This apparent vandalism proved, however, to be of great protective value to the paintings when, in the early 'fifties, the Prince Consort transferred to Marlborough House some of the industrial exhibits from the Great Exhibition of 1851. He gave to this collection the lugubrious title of the "Museum of Manufactures," but towards the end of the decade these various horrors of manufactured art were fortunately removed to the new museum at South Kensington. Marlborough House was then restored and decorated for the Prince of Wales when, amongst other extensive alterations, another floor was added and the present hideous plate-glass windows were inserted, which were at that time considered an unquestionable improvement on the original eighteenth-century fenestration. Thus by the early 'sixties, Marlborough House had been altered, almost out of recognition, from the attractive if modest residence built a hundred and fifty years before by Sir Christopher Wren. But the general aspect of the house to-day is the same as it was seventy-three years ago when Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, brought home from his honeymoon his beautiful Danish bride.

"Bertie," as he was always called in the family, had been extremely fortunate in the Princess



"DEAR ALIX LOOKING LIKE A ROSE . . ."

whom his great-uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians and his eldest sister, the Crown Princess of Prussia, had chosen to be his wife. The Queen had been far too immersed in mourning to take an active part, but she was satisfied with the knowledge of her husband's approval of the alliance, given shortly before his death. The impending struggle, however, between Denmark and the Germanic powers over Schleswig-Holstein had led the Prince Consort to qualify his consent. "We take the Princess," he had written, "but not her relations." The Princess was called Alexandra Caroline Maria Charlotte Louisa Julia of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg, and she was the daughter of King Christian IX. of Denmark, who had inherited the Danish throne through his mother, Princess Louise of Hesse-Cassel.

The Crown Princess had arranged the first meeting, but King Leopold was responsible for the romantic rendezvous between "Bertie" and "Alix," as Princess Alexandra was called, in the Gothic gloom of Speier Cathedral, which, although carefully organized, had been planned to appear fortuitous. This had been followed by a further meeting in the more mundane atmosphere of Ostend. "Bertie," who was throughout life extremely susceptible to feminine charm, was only too ready to propose when summoned to Brussels by his great-uncle for that purpose; "Alix," of course, accepted, Queen Victoria's

consent and blessing were readily given and, on September 11., 1862, King Leopold had the great pleasure of writing to his niece a full account of this happy event, emphasizing the point that the Prince of Wales, "like his parents," was marrying for love.

On March 7., 1863, Princess Alexandra arrived at Windsor Castle for her wedding, which took place three days later in St. George's Chapel, where no marriage ceremony had been held since that of Henry I. in 1122. At the bottom of the grand staircase of the Castle, the Queen met her future daughter-in-law, "Dear Alix looking like a rose," she wrote to her uncle Leopold, "was wearing a grey dress, with a violet jacket trimmed with fur, and a white bonnet." At the wedding the Queen sat in the Royal Closet, a balcony on the Gospel side and "sat down feeling strange and bewildered." During the ceremony, "Dearest Albert's Choral was sung, which affected me much" and, at the close, "the young couple looked up at me, and I gave them an affectionate nod and kissed my hand to sweet Alix." After the reception which, owing to deep mourning, was confined to the family, "Darling Alix" drove away for the honeymoon, "looking lovely in a white silk dress, lace shawl and white bonnet with orange flowers." For the Queen, who had watched the ceremony with conflicting emotions, owing to the recent death of the Prince Consort, there was only one relief. ". . . Then I drove

. . . down to the Mausoleum, and prayed by that beloved resting-place, feeling soothed and calmed."

On returning from their week's honeymoon at Osborne, on March 19th., the Prince and Princess of Wales took up their residence at Marlborough House, which was to be their London home for nearly forty years and here, as has been said, they innovated an original Court of their own. To-day, when wealth and wit have been for so long an easy passport into most social spheres, it is difficult to understand the general sensation, mingled with horror, which the Prince caused by his unconventional selection of friends. Apart from those received officially, the social circle of the Queen and the Prince Consort had been restricted to their German relatives and to such members of the English nobility who, in Prince Albert's opinion, were neither frivolous nor lacking in the domestic virtues. But the Prince of Wales eagerly welcomed to his house men and women of very different stations in life, and he was not anxious to enquire too carefully into the private lives of his associates and friends. Those connected with the Turf came first in his favour and thus he became intimate with many of the old families who were interested in racing, but his numerous friendships with financial and industrial magnates of middle-class and even of plebeian origin, often of Jewish blood, could only be ascribed to his appreciation of affluence and good company.

The most conspicuous members of the Prince's wide circle of friends were the international family of Rothschild, and he formed life-long connections with Baron Lionel's three sons, Nathaniel, Alfred and Leopold, the elder of whom, at his insistence, was made a peer in 1885 and was the first Jew to be elevated to the House of Lords. Members of the Civil Service and of the professions, the law, medicine, journalism and the stage were all welcome guests at Marlborough House, although an exception was made of literary people, whose company was never congenial to the Prince. This exclusion, however, caused little surprise, since a friend of the Prince once remarked that he possessed "a singular incapacity to apply his mind to any sort of study consecutively for half an hour."

If the catholicity of the Prince's taste in friends often caused his mother astonishment and alarm, some of his habits and activities were even less calculated to reassure her. Of his predilection for salacious anecdote, the Queen would doubtless be unaware, as also of his fondness for the practical joke which, owing to his royal patronage, remained a fashionable imbecility for nearly fifty years. But the Queen may have heard rumours that her son preferred to drive to some of his social engagements in a hired cab rather than in a royal carriage and that, owing to his example, the regrettable habit of smoking had become more widely practised. Indeed, the Prince was

an inveterate smoker of cigars, introducing the custom of smoking immediately after dinner instead of waiting for the ladies to go to bed, while he founded the Marlborough Club across the street in Pall Mall facing his home, owing to the restrictions on smoking at White's. Greater liberty and fewer conventions were characteristics of the Marlborough, in the yard behind which the Prince of Wales and his fellow-members played bowls after dinner until the neighbours protested, maddened by the continual rumbling of the balls and the loud laughter of the players.

But despite the Prince's pleasure in the companionship of his more jovial contemporaries, he remained acutely conscious of his royal position. Any personal familiarity was deeply resented and he always wished that his friends should be immaculately and fashionably dressed. His insistence on punctuality was no less severe and the Princess of Wales, although married to him for nearly half a century, alone dared to be consistently unpunctual. In the sanguine expectation of being kept waiting less often, the Prince kept the clocks at Sandringham half an hour fast, a custom to which his son, King George V., also adhered.

A critic of the Prince of Wales in his youth, once remarked that his social life was "a perpetual search in the daytime of hours he had lost the night before." Of these daytime hours the Prince spent as many as possible on the race-course, loving, in his own words, "the glorious

uncertainties of the turf.” His frequent presence on the course made him as popular with his future subjects as it made him unpopular with the Queen, who always reserved her severest censures for his daily attendance at Ascot. She wrote to him, for example, early in June, 1870, from Balmoral: “. . . now that Ascot races are approaching, I wish to repeat *earnestly and seriously* . . . that I trust you will . . . as my Uncle William IV. and Aunt, and we ourselves did, *confine* your visits to the Races to the *two* days *Tuesday* and *Thursday*, and not go on *Wednesday* and *Friday*, to which William IV. never went, nor did *we* . . .” But the Prince was insensitive to the good example set by “Uncle William IV. and Aunt,” and replied to his mother with considerable firmness from Marlborough House on June 5th.: “. . . I fear, dear Mama, that no year goes round without your giving me a jobation on the subject of racing . . . should we shun races entirely we should no doubt win the high approval of Lord Shaftesbury and the Low Church party, but at the same time racing would get worse and worse, and those pleasant social gatherings would cease to exist. . . .” These arguments naturally made little impression on the Queen, who happened to have a higher opinion both of Lord Shaftesbury and of the Low Church party than of people who attended “pleasant social gatherings” connected with horse-racing. The Prince’s further argument in the

same letter, that it was difficult for him not to be present at Ascot every day as all his house-party wished to attend, could not have enhanced his friends' reputations with the Queen, although she may have been mollified by the conclusion: "I am always most anxious to meet your wishes, dear Mama, in every respect, and always regret if we are not quite *d'accord*. . . ." On the subject of horse-racing, Queen Victoria and the Prince remained in a chronic condition of being "not quite *d'accord*" for forty years, but her son never once missed a race-meeting on that account.

The hazards of the turf were not the only "glorious uncertainties" that appealed to the Prince of Wales. As a young man he was very partial to a game of whist and, according to Mr. Gladstone, he had "an *immense* whist memory." When Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister and in attendance on the Queen at Balmoral in September, 1871, he dined one night with the Prince of Wales at Abergeldie. "After dinner he invited me to play whist," wrote Mr. Gladstone in his diary. "I said, 'For love, Sir?' He said, 'Well, shillings and half-a-crown on the rubber,' to which I submitted." This early love of whist, unfortunately, soon developed into a preference for card games, in which chance predominated over skill. In Germany and on the Riviera he had learnt to enjoy roulette and baccarat, but unwisely he was not content only to gamble abroad and a game of baccarat he once played

in England, was the cause of the gravest public scandal in his life.

In September, 1891, the Prince of Wales went to stay at the residence of a certain Mr. Arthur Wilson, a wealthy shipowner of Hull, for Doncaster races. Mr. Wilson's house was called Tranby Croft. There were several distinguished guests invited to meet the heir to the throne, including Lord Coventry, General Owen Williams and Sir William Gordon-Cumming, the Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion of the Scots Guards. Several ladies were also amongst the guests, but these did not include the Princess of Wales. Each night after dinner the party, with the exception of Mr. Wilson, sat down to baccarat and, on one occasion, it was observed with dismay that Sir William Gordon-Cumming, despite the comparatively low stakes played, was engaged in cheating his fellow guests.

The next day, after a painful discussion as to how the culprit should be treated, in which the Prince joined, it was decided that, if he desired to avoid publicity, he should be forced to sign a paper acknowledging his guilt and promising never to gamble again. To this Sir William agreed, and it appeared, to the general relief, that a most regrettable incident had been finally closed. But this satisfaction was short-lived since the story leaked out and, in self defence, Sir William brought an action for slander against Mrs. Wilson, her daughter and her son-in-law. The case lasted

a week, during which time the Prince was always in court and was most reluctantly compelled to give evidence for the Wilsons, for whom the verdict was given. Sir William Gordon-Cumming was, in consequence, publicly branded as a card-sharper.

The interest taken in this unfortunate case was naturally intense and universal and the Prince of Wales was held up in the Press to general opprobrium. Even *The Times* pompously condemned him for mixing in questionable society and for indulging in questionable pleasures which had given a shock to the monarchical principle. The Prince, although deeply resenting the exaggerated attacks on his mode of life, took the incident to heart and gradually abandoned all card games of pure chance. In their place he took up the new game of bridge at which, although exceptionally lucky, he never acquired more than the most moderate skill. After the lawsuit the Prince, powerless, owing to his position, either to defend or explain his conduct to the public, wrote an exculpatory letter to Dr. Benson, the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he had been on friendly terms for many years. In this letter the following sentence occurred: "I have a horror of gambling . . . as I consider that gambling, like intemperance, is one of the greatest curses which a country could be afflicted with." Few people could have guessed that the Prince held these views.

The much-advertised social life led by the Prince of Wales tended to obscure, in the eyes of his future subjects, the wide field of his philanthropic activities, which were his sole outlet as far as public work was concerned. From all matters of State, the Prince was rigorously excluded by the Queen who, by this obstinate, jealous and short-sighted behaviour, made herself chiefly answerable for her son's hedonistic activities. It would be impossible to exaggerate the deep sense of humiliation felt by the Prince for nearly forty years, as a result of his mother's persistent refusal to allow him to shoulder responsibilities or to have access to State affairs. The following two examples, the first taken from the period of her early widowhood and the second from the last decade of her reign, were typical of the Queen's attitude towards her eldest son.

After the Prince Consort's death, the Queen ceased to pay her accustomed visits to her troops at Aldershot and in 1864 the Prince of Wales, in an audacious letter, proposed to his mother that he might be occasionally allowed to go there in her place. Suspicious and startled at this suggestion, the Queen wrote to her cousin the Duke of Cambridge, the Commander-in-Chief, to ascertain his views. The Duke supported the Prince's proposal in order "to give his mind an interest not immediately connected with amusements." But to allay his cousin's anxiety that

her son might be given a command at the camp, the Duke hastened to inform her that, "as regards the Prince taking upon himself any sort of authority or responsibility, I quite agree with you that it is out of the question." The Duke added smugly: "You know me too well not to be assured that I would take care of that." At the end of this illuminating letter, the Duke of Cambridge defined exactly what the Prince of Wales would not be allowed to do at Aldershot. "The Prince takes no salutes in my presence," he concluded, "can give no instructions to any military officer and consequently is entirely in my hands in this respect."

That incident occurred when the Prince of Wales was twenty-three. Thirty-three years passed, and the position of the heir to the throne was substantially the same when, in November, 1892, on the recommendation of both Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone, it was suggested to the Queen that the Prince should receive intelligence of Cabinet proceedings. The Queen was amazed at this joint suggestion of her Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, and, in a letter, asked somewhat obscurely, if they had "paused before pursuing this course *regularly*?" The Queen added: "she *thinks* it can only have been (intended) on very particular occasions." The Prince of Wales was then fifty-two.

In most of the Prince's public works and in all the entertaining at Marlborough House, the

Princess of Wales played a gracious and gentle part. It was, in consequence, a matter to her of considerable surprise and even alarm, when in 1864 she suddenly found herself in a position of political prominence and, indeed, of some embarrassment to her recently adopted country. That year witnessed the solution of the Schleswig-Holstein question by force of arms, and when the Prussian and Austrian armies marched into Danish territory and forcibly annexed both provinces, naturally the sympathies of the Prince and Princess of Wales, herself a daughter of the King of Denmark, were entirely on the side of the invaded and spoliated Kingdom. This attitude was strongly shared by the majority of the English people led by Lords Palmerston and Russell who, in the early months of 1864, were most anxious that England should intervene in the war on the side of Denmark against the Germanic Powers. This bellicose point of view was not shared by Queen Victoria who with her usual political acumen, perceived the folly of precipitating her country into a war in which England could obtain no territorial advantages and, on the military side, might easily suffer defeat.

The Queen's far-seeing and dispassionate policy was cordially supported by her uncle King Leopold, then in the penultimate year of his life, and he also realized and deplored the prominent and popular position now held by the Princess

owing to the great sympathy for the Danes amongst the English public, and to the complete seclusion in which his niece lived at that time. Indeed the King felt considerable jealousy on the Queen's behalf. "Vicky little dreamt in selecting a charming Princess," he wrote to his niece, ignoring the fact that he was far more responsible for the choice, "that she would become a source of difficulties for England, and perhaps the cause of a popular war against Prussia." But the personal side of the Princess of Wales' popularity, as compared with the indifference in which her mother-in-law was then held, was a source of even greater anxiety to the King of the Belgians. "Our own dreadful loss put Bertie and Alix forward," he wrote in the same letter: "He and his wife are constantly before the public in *every imaginable shape and character*, and entirely fill the public mind." The fact that her daughter-in-law was for the moment a political encumbrance mattered little to the Queen in comparison with her uncle's broad hint that she herself was being overshadowed in popular esteem by the Princess of Wales. So, a fortnight after receiving this letter, the Queen drove to Paddington Station through Hyde Park in an open carriage and four. It was her first public appearance since the death of the Prince Consort. On arrival at Windsor she instantly wrote to her uncle, recounting her reception by the public. "Everyone said that the difference shown, when I appeared, and when

Bertie and Alix drive, was not to be described. Naturally, for them no one stops or runs, as they always did, and do doubly now, for me.”

If the Queen was satisfied, so was the Princess of Wales, who never courted the cheers of the populace and always treated her mother-in-law with exquisite tact and consideration. For example, on her twenty-fourth birthday the Queen gave her a stone, probably a cornelian set in gold, which she had picked up on the sea-shore. The Princess appeared enchanted with this somewhat frugal present and wrote in thanks: “The little brooch is *too* pretty, and is doubly precious in my eyes from your having picked up the stone yourself.” The general affection which the Princess inspired was further increased in 1867 when it became known in February that she was seriously ill with rheumatic fever. Although she was convalescent by April, the attack left for some years a painful affection of the leg, which caused her to limp, and so eagerly and widely was she copied by society in whatsoever she did, that distinguished ladies whose legs were perfectly healthy, hastened, in public, to imitate the Princess and thereby initiated that crazy fashion, “The Alexandra Limp.”

Two years after this illness, the Prince and Princess of Wales left England for a tour of Europe and the Near East. Owing to the inconvenience caused by a recrudescence of scandalous innuendoes regarding his behaviour, the Prince

had decided to spend the winter and spring of 1868-69, abroad with his wife. After visiting Berlin and Vienna the Prince and Princess, on January 28th., embarked at Trieste for Alexandria, on board H.M.S. *Ariadne*. The royal suite consisted of Colonel Teesdale, Captain Arthur Ellis, Lord Carrington, Mr. Oliver Montague, Doctor Minter and one lady-in-waiting, the Hon. Mrs. William Grey, who was a Swede. Cairo was reached on February 3rd., and there the royal party was lavishly entertained by the Khedive Ismail. At a dinner given by the Khedive's mother, the Princess of Wales had to accustom herself to using a tortoiseshell and coral spoon in place of a knife and fork, and to eating such strange delicacies as onions dipped in gravy, sausage omelette, sugar and vermicelli, rosewater and tapioca, and to drinking vinegar flavoured with herbs. After Cairo, a month was spent on the Nile in a dahabeah where the Prince was joined by the Duke of Sutherland, Mr. Richard Owen the naturalist, Mr. William Russell a *Times* correspondent, Sir John Fowler an eminent engineer and Sir Samuel Baker, the intrepid explorer and hunter of big game. It was all very delightful and improving for the Princess of Wales who was radiantly happy to be in the constant company of her husband and out of reach of the exasperating gossip of London.

On the return journey to Europe, Constantinople was visited where the Sultan, eager to

surpass the Khedive's hospitality, violated one of the strictest tenets of his faith by giving a dinner party to his English guests of both sexes, which even Turkish ladies were allowed to attend. During their stay, the Prince and Princess had, of course, to visit the bazaars when with childish enthusiasm, they assumed the pseudonym of Williams. An eye-witness later reported: "Mr. Williams enjoyed a pipe and Mrs. Williams fascinated the hardest bargainer in all Stamboul."

A visit of eleven days was then paid to Greece where, at Athens and Corfu, the Princess enjoyed the company of her brother, King George I., and of his wife, Queen Olga, the niece of the Tsar Alexander II. Six days were afterwards spent in Paris at the "Bristol," an hotel which was later irreverently described by Monsieur Ritz as "*cette vieille boîte*," before returning to London. This six months' holiday had provided a delicious care-free existence for the Princess of Wales, but the realities of life were quickly brought home to her on arriving at Marlborough House. There a letter from Queen Victoria awaited her which, after informing her that her children, although in good health, would require in the future most careful handling, concluded as follows: "You will, I fear, have incurred enormous expenses, and I don't think you will find any disposition (on the part of parliament) . . . to give you any more money."

The rumours regarding the Prince of Wales'



"YOU WILL, I FEAR, HAVE INCURRED ENORMOUS EXPENSES,"

Queen Victoria to the Princess of Wales, on her return from Near East
1869

PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES (LATER KING EDWARD VII AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA)
WITH PARTY. EGYPT 1869

imprudent associations, which had been the main reason for his tour abroad, received an unfortunate impetus two years after his return by the distressing incident of the Mordaunt divorce case. In 1870, Sir Charles Mordaunt brought an action of divorce against his wife and made in his petition, solely on his wife's confession, an allegation against the Prince of Wales. Lady Mordaunt, who was twenty-three and one of the eight daughters of Sir Thomas Moncrieffe had, however, before the hearing of the case, become hopelessly insane which naturally vitiated her allegation, while the twelve letters which, in the course of several years, the Prince of Wales had addressed to "My dear Lady Mordaunt," were pronounced by the Lord Chancellor to be "unexceptionable in every way." The evidence given by the Prince in the trial further proved his complete innocence, but the sordid incidents of the case accentuated by Lady Mordaunt's insanity together with the unfortunate fact that the two cited co-respondents, Viscount Cole and Sir Frederick Johnstone were personal friends of the Prince, made the whole episode extremely mortifying for the Princess of Wales and greatly inflamed public opinion against the heir to the throne.

The Mordaunt case also happened to coincide with a wave of unparalleled republican feeling in this country caused by the wide unpopularity of the Queen, owing to her continued and determined seclusion, and by the substitution in France

of the Second Empire by the Third Republic, which caused violent political repercussions in England. The Republican movement here, which was led by Mr. Bradlaugh and Sir Charles Dilke, received unexpected support from Sir Henry Hoare, M.P. for Norwich, and from the poet Swinburne, while republican clubs sprang up like mushrooms all over the country, even in such Tory centres as Birmingham, Plymouth, Norwich and Aberdeen. Even Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister, made no secret to the Queen of his apprehensions for the future of monarchy, while his colleague, Lord Selborne, informed her that in his opinion, if the French Republic held its ground, England would follow the example of France.

By the winter of 1871 the republican movement was definitely a menace to the monarchical régime, when an incident occurred which not only crushed republicanism in this country, but also restored the royal family to popular esteem. The Queen did not emerge from her seclusion, nor did the French Republic fall, but England was swept by a wave of sentiment as natural in its cause as it was illogical in its result.

Early in November, 1871, the Prince went to Scarborough to stay with Lord and Lady Londesborough at Londesborough Lodge. On returning to Sandringham and shortly after his birthday on November 9th., the Prince fell ill with typhoid, clearly contracted on this visit to Yorkshire. A

public announcement was made to that effect on November 23rd. At the same time as the Prince developed typhoid, Lord Chesterfield and his groom Blegge, who had been with him at Londesborough Lodge, also became victims of the same malady. Lord Chesterfield died on December 1st., and his groom a fortnight later. Meanwhile on the 8th., the Prince of Wales was so critically ill that Lord Granville wrote to the Queen: "there hardly seems to be hope left." The same afternoon the Queen arrived at Sandringham. The day of December 14th. broke with no apparent hope of recovery for the Prince of Wales. It was a tragic anniversary. Ten years before, to the day, the Prince Consort had died from the same complaint. The Queen, the Princess of Wales and Princess Alice watched over their beloved patient and the former wrote later in her Journal: "Alice and I said to one another in tears, 'There can be no hope.' " Then, as if by a miracle, during the morning of the 14th., the doctors observed a slight improvement in the Prince's condition. The progress was maintained, and by the 21st. all danger was past.

The course of the Prince of Wales' illness had been followed by the English people with an eager and personal interest and, in the universal joy at his recovery, the spirit of republicanism faded into an unwelcome memory. A few stalwarts, such as Mr. Henry Fawcett, the blind radical Member for Brighton, questioned if the Prince's

recuperation would be of real benefit to the throne, but the consensus of public opinion was accurately expressed when, in the House of Commons, Sir Charles Dilke's motion for a full inquiry into the Queen's expenditure of public funds, was ignominiously defeated, amidst delighted applause from all parts of the House. Indeed, Lord Henry Lennox, a Tory M.P., accurately summed up the situation when he wrote to Mr. Disraeli: "What a sell for Dilke this illness has been."

On February 27., 1872, the Queen, despite fear of "the dreadful fatigue" and dislike of "this public show," consented to be present with her son at a thanksgiving service held in St. Paul's Cathedral for the Prince's recovery. The magnificent reception they received from the crowd passed all expectation and yet the Queen, in her Journal, described the events of the day in a curiously dispassionate manner. "The Cathedral itself is so dull, cold, dreary and dingy," she wrote. "It so badly lacks decoration and colour. It was stifling hot." The masterpiece of Sir Christopher Wren appealed to the Queen as little as did the ceremony. "The service appeared to me cold," she added, "and too long." The Queen then gave a description of her clothes for the occasion. She wore a black silk dress and coat, trimmed with broad miniver. Her black lace headdress, with long velvet strings, was surmounted by a small cone-shaped bonnet, composed



"... A BLACK SILK DRESS AND COAT TRIMMED WITH BROAD
MINIVER"

Queen Victoria in her Journal
February 1872

QUEEN VICTORIA IN DRESS WORN AT THANKSGIVING SERVICE IN 1872

of a white feather and spring flowers. The Queen concluded her description of the day's ceremony on a satisfactory note. Referring to the dress of her youngest daughter, she wrote: "Beatrice looked very well in mauve, trimmed with swans down."

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER THREE

“A powerful Germany can never be dangerous to England, but the very reverse.”

QUEEN VICTORIA IN HER JOURNAL
September 9., 1870

WHEN at the height of her unpopularity in the country, the Queen had been consoled in 1870 by the engagement of her fourth daughter Princess Louise, born in 1848, to the Marquis of Lorne, eldest son of the Duke of Argyll. This marriage made a remarkable break with precedent, since the last daughter of an English sovereign to marry a commoner was Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VII of England and widow of Louis XII. of France, who married, as her second husband the Duke of Suffolk, in the early part of the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the betrothal of Princess Louise to Lord Lorne received the whole-hearted support of the Queen who, when her daughter was approached by a Prussian Prince with an offer of marriage in 1869, expressed herself as being “irreconcilably against a Prussian alliance.” Indeed she was

delighted that Princess Louise was able to fulfil her expressed desire to marry one of her own countrymen. Perhaps the most beautiful of Queen Victoria's daughters, Princess Louise was the only member of her generation who was not married to a foreign royalty.

The engagement took place on October 3., 1870, at Balmoral and the Queen recorded it as follows in her Journal: "This was an eventful day! Our dear Louise was engaged to Lord Lorne. The event took place during a walk from Glassalt Shiel (where the Queen had a lodge) to the Dhu Loch. . . . Though I was not unprepared for this result, I felt painfully the thought of losing her." The Queen was naturally well acquainted with Lord Lorne whom she had met for the first time in 1847, when she and the Prince Consort paid a visit to Inverary Castle, the home of his father, the Duke of Argyll. She wrote in her Journal, at that time, that on their arrival at the Castle, "outside stood the Marquis of Lorne, just two years old, a dear, white, fat, fair little fellow with reddish hair but very delicate features . . . he is such a merry, independent little child." Lord Lorne's delicate features were retained through adolescence, and he grew into a most distinguished-looking man.

The wedding took place at St. George's Chapel on March 21., 1871, and the Queen gave her daughter away. Five months later, Princess Louise and her husband visited Dublin where they were



"THIS WAS AN EVENTFUL DAY! OUR DEAR LOUISE ENGAGED
TO LORD LORNE"

*Queen Victoria in her Journal
October 1870*

MARQUIS OF LORNE (LATER DUKE OF ARGYLL) IN 1871

most cordially received and Lord Lorne, in a letter to his mother-in-law, described how they had been entertained at an agricultural dinner when the Lord Mayor, who was in the chair, insisted on addressing him as the "Markiss." Seven years afterwards, Lord Lorne was appointed Governor-General of Canada, in which Dominion both he and Princess Louise were deservedly popular. The Queen, however, much regretted their absence from England and wrote in her Journal on January 1., 1879: "What a sad beginning to the New Year! What sadness, what grief on so many sides! . . . and my poor dear Loosy, far away in a distant land, in another quarter of the globe!"

Early in 1886, when Mr. Gladstone was forming his third Ministry, it was suggested that Lord Lorne should join the Cabinet. That Princess Louise's husband entertained political aspirations of a Liberal persuasion, was generally thought probable, but that he might have consented to join a Government in favour of Home Rule for Ireland, caused considerable surprise. His brother-in-law the Prince of Wales, was particularly opposed to the suggestion and wrote: ". . . I hardly think the Queen's son-in-law should form part of the Government, no matter what party is in power. And how could he form part of a Home Rule Government? . . . I am very strong on that point. . . . He would be in an utterly false position, and I can hardly imagine that my

sister would wish it." Lord Lorne neither joined Mr. Gladstone's nor any later government, but it is of considerable interest that as late as 1886, it was considered possible for the Sovereign's son-in-law to play an active part in political life.

Lord Lorne, who succeeded his father in 1900 as the ninth Duke of Argyll, died in 1914. H.R.H. Princess Louise, who now lives in Kensington Palace is a talented sculptress, as is well known, and most appropriately, she was responsible for the statue of Queen Victoria in her Coronation robes, which stands in Kensington Gardens, facing the Round Pond.

In 1872, the year following the marriage of Princess Louise, the Queen received a most welcome visitor at Windsor in the person of the Empress Victoria Augusta of Germany. Born in 1811, she was eight years older than the Queen and was the daughter of Frederick Charles, Grand Duke of Saxe-Weimar. In her youth she had been deeply influenced by Goethe, and considered herself sufficiently cultured to neglect her clothes. Indeed the Emperor, once complaining of his wife's hats, remarked that she looked like the ace of spades.

Belonging in sympathy to an earlier and more liberal-minded Germany, the Empress Augusta had little in common with the ruthless spirit of Prussia under Prince Bismarck and, deploring the war with France in 1870, she wrote to Queen



"I FELT PAINFULLY THE THOUGHT OF LOSING HER"

Queen Victoria in her Journal
October 1870

PRINCESS LOUISE (DUCHESS OF ARGYLL) IN 1871

Victoria on July 15th. of that year: "Why must Germany suffer and Spain be spared?" After the victory of Sedan when France lay at the mercy of Prussia, she wrote again to the Queen regarding the terms of peace, and expressed the chivalrous opinion that "the boundary line of language should in particular be maintained, and no really French territory be claimed." Prince Bismarck deeply distrusted her moderating influence over the Emperor and, in order to impair her authority, he directed the Government Press to assert that, although a Protestant, the Empress was giving money to Catholic priests to assist them during the "Kulturkampf" Bismarck was directing against the Church. The Empress Augusta on her part, returned his hostility with disdain and like her husband, set little store on the imperial title they received in 1870, realizing they entirely owed this dignity to the unsympathetic genius of the "Iron Chancellor."

The visit paid by the Empress Augusta to Windsor afforded mutual pleasure and the Queen wrote in her Journal: "I value her friendship much, as she is such a superior person and really attached to me." A short time after her return to Berlin, the Empress honoured the British Embassy with her presence at dinner, after which the Ambassador's wife Lady Emily Russell, wrote to the Queen: "The Empress, whose conversation is so brilliantly clever as Your Majesty knows, was more so than ever throughout the evening."

Her Majesty repeatedly said: 'I fancy myself in dear England. . . .'

Queen Victoria did not return this visit until 1888 when she came to Berlin to console her friend on the death of the Emperor William I. in March of that year. The Emperor was ninety-one when he died, having been married for nearly sixty years and the Empress Augusta was overwhelmed by his death, according to the Queen's description of her arrival at the Palace in Potsdam. "I went up in a lift alone, and there was the Empress, in deep mourning with a long veil, seated in a chair, quite crumpled up and deathly pale, really rather a ghastly sight." But despite her grief, the Empress Augusta took considerable interest, and perhaps some malicious pleasure, in the visit which the unwilling Prince Bismarck was forced to pay to the Queen of England during her stay in Berlin. The Empress was well aware that Bismarck regarded the Queen with considerable awe and she also knew the latter's opinion of the Prince. "Bismarck is so overbearing, violent, grasping and unprincipled, that *no one* can stand it," she had once written in a fit of rage to the Crown Princess. But the meeting between these two Titans proved a disappointing anti-climax. Certainly the Prince showed unwonted signs of nervousness before entering the Presence, but this is all the Queen reported of the momentous interview: ". . . was agreeably surprised to find him so amiable and gentle. I



"... SHE IS SUCH A SUPERIOR PERSON, AND REALLY ATTACHED
TO ME"

*Queen Victoria in her Journal
May 1872*

QUEEN VICTORIA AND EMPRESS AUGUSTA OF GERMANY. C. 1872

shook hands with him and asked him to sit down."

The Empress Augusta survived her husband by less than two years, since she died in January, 1890. She was a witty and well-educated woman, a devoted wife and mother, but her generous impulses had been thwarted and her spirit stifled in a court which was closed to culture, and amongst a people whose spiritual values, during the reign, had been gradually debased to the worship of force. Queen Victoria much regretted the death of the Empress Augusta and wrote of her in her Journal: "For forty years we had been on intimate terms, and I cannot forget how fond dear Albert was of her, and she of him. How happy it always made her to come to England!"

Although the Queen was deeply interested in the House of Hohenzollern owing to the marriage of her eldest daughter the Princess Royal, to the Prussian Crown Prince, she was only distantly connected to the Emperor William I. and his wife, while she was the first cousin of King George V. of Hanover, whose country had been annexed by Prussia in 1866. Naturally Coburg, the home of her mother and the Prince Consort, was the State in Germany to which Queen Victoria was most attached, but she herself was by birth a Hanoverian and, had she been born a boy rather than a girl, she would, on becoming the Sovereign of Great Britain, have acceded at the same time, to the Throne of Hanover. This accident of birth, in the

case of Queen Victoria, had, in the course of time, vital reactions on the relations between England and Germany.

From the assumption of the crown of England in 1714 by the Elector of Hanover, who became in his new realm King George I., until the death of King William IV. in 1837, Great Britain was an appanage of the House of Hanover. Owing, however, to the greater significance of England in European politics, the Electors of Hanover ruled as Kings in Great Britain, while their Electorate, which in 1815 became a Kingdom, was administered by Viceroys, sometimes drawn from the younger sons of their own family. This system worked well in the eighteenth century owing to constant hostilities with France, during which Hanoverian troops were most useful in winning English victories. During the Napoleonic era, the French occupation of Hanover was an added source of irritation to this country, but the apparently stable conditions which followed the Congress of Vienna appeared ideal for the indefinite continuance of the union of England and Hanover.

This union, however, only endured a further twenty-two years and was broken not by war nor political expediency, but by the failure of male heirs to George IV. and William IV. and to their brothers the Dukes of York and Kent. When therefore, Princess Victoria, the only child of the latter Duke, became Queen of

England in 1837, she was excluded from the Throne of Hanover owing to the operation of the Salic law in that country, and her uncle the Duke of Cumberland became King Ernest I. This fortuitous dynastic and political severance between Great Britain and Hanover did not at first appear to be of fundamental advantage to either country. Certainly the English Royal Family gained by the departure of the Duke of Cumberland for his new Throne, since his malevolent and vicious conduct had long made him the most hated of Queen Victoria's "wicked uncles." It might therefore have been supposed that Hanover was unfortunate in the monarch thrust upon her, but although Ernest I was a most didactic and illiberal-minded Sovereign, he ruled his country with considerable wisdom and justice and he managed in 1848, the Year of Revolutions, to trim his sails so skilfully to the rebellious winds that he was one of the few European rulers to retain his Throne.

King Ernest had married Princess Frederica of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, from which union there was one son George, born in 1819. This son was quite unlike his father both in mind and body. The latter was once described as a "tall, powerful man with a hideous face . . . one eye turned quite out of its place," but Prince George was very handsome in face and his body was slim and well-built. In mind also father and son had little in common except for a profound dislike of democracy and the Catholic Church, for while

the King was immoral in his private life, brutal in behaviour, and coarse in conversation, Prince George was virtuous, sensitive and kind. A terrible catastrophe, however, overtook him while still a boy, and there is some divergence of opinion over the unlucky incident which at the age of fourteen deprived him of his sight. He was living at Kew with his father and mother in 1832, and one story relates that, standing one morning by the window and playing with the tassel of a blind-cord which was ornamented with metal, he carelessly flicked it across his eyes. Another story records that it was his mother's bag, decorated with some long metal fringe which in the same manner was the cause of the tragedy. In any case by the following year, Prince George was completely blind and his aunt Elizabeth, Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg, wrote of him: ". . . to see that lovely creature led about . . . is enough to break one's heart."

King Ernest I. died in 1851 and the Prince succeeded as King George V., to be known, for the rest of his life and in history, as the "Blind King of Hanover." His reign which lasted for fifteen years was, in domestic affairs, chiefly remarkable for the long and successful struggle which he waged in defence of his absolutist principles, against the growing liberal tendencies of his subjects. But it was in his relations with Prussia that his reign is chiefly memorable.

Mention has already been made of the intense



" . . . TO SEE THAT LOVELY CREATURE LED ABOUT . . . IS ENOUGH
TO BREAK ONE'S HEART"

The Landgravine of Hesse-Homburg in 1833

KING GEORGE V OF HANOVER IN 1876

indignation caused in England by the successful war waged by Prussia and Austria against Denmark and the subsequent occupation of Schleswig and Holstein by the former powers. Prince Bismarck, however, had no intention of sharing the spoils of victory with Austria and in June, 1866 the Seven Weeks' War broke out between Prussia aided by Italy on one side, and Austria supported, amongst other German States, by Hanover, on the other.

This war created wide consternation in the English Royal Family since, while Queen Victoria's cousin King George of Hanover, her brother-in-law the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, and one son-in-law, the Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, were fighting on the side of Austria, her eldest and most consequential son-in-law was the Crown Prince of Prussia. The true significance of the separation between Great Britain and Hanover thirty years before must now have been abundantly clear to the Queen. Had she been the King rather than the Queen of England, or had the Salic law not operated in Hanover, she would have been the Sovereign of both countries in 1866 and war between this country and Prussia would therefore have been inevitable at that time, had Bismarck's policy prevailed. But the Queen was not to know that the incidence of her birth only postponed the conflict fifty years.

The Seven Weeks' War proved disastrous for Austria and her allies. The Imperial armies were

decisively beaten at Sadowa in Bohemia on July 3rd., while a week before the Hanoverian forces had capitulated at Langensalza. By the subsequent Treaty of Prague, King George was deposed, his family funds confiscated, and Hanover was incorporated in Prussia.

The eclipse of the House of Hanover deeply distressed the Prince of Wales who in his love of the good things of life and in his tolerance of other people's weaknesses, as well as of his own, had inherited some of the more amiable characteristics of his Hanoverian predecessors. The deposition of his cousin King George had meant that the House of Hanover was no longer a potent Royal Family on the Continent, while Queen Victoria's wish that on her death, the Prince of Wales should be the founder of the joint Dynasty of Saxe-Coburg and Brunswick, would weaken the exclusive influence of the latter line. But the Prince did not confine his sympathy to academic expressions of regrets for his dethroned cousin but, with his usual energy and kindliness of purpose, he assisted King George with his influence and advice in his long struggle with Bismarck to recover the "Welfen-Fonds," or family funds, confiscated by Prussia in 1866. A compromise was eventually reached with the Prince's assistance and the administration of the funds was placed in the hands of a neutral commission, from which the exiled King of Hanover was able to draw an adequate income. But the Prince of Wales, in

common with many of Bismarck's enemies, was wont to refer to the confiscated "Welfen-Fonds" as the "Reptilien-Fonds" (Reptile Funds), and maintained that the Chancellor used the money for bribing the Press to support his detestable policy.

The Prince's concern for the King of Hanover and his dislike of the Prussian domination over Germany, after the Seven Weeks' War, was acutely shared by his mother who, however, as Queen of England and mother-in-law of the Crown Prince of Prussia, was compelled to maintain officially a neutral attitude in German affairs. But this enforced conduct did not prevent the Queen from expressing in a letter to her daughter "Vicky," the Crown Princess, her strong disapproval of Prussian sequestration of the properties and palaces belonging to the dethroned German Royalities. "Vicky," who possessed much of her mother's strength of purpose coupled with her father's powers of reasoning, answered pertinently that the Queen's strictures were "not quite just" and reminded her that, when Great Britain acquired possessions in the East, "Englishmen have not always shown themselves as scrupulous, humane, civilized and enlightened as they *should* have done." The Crown Princess went on to admit that the comparison was not quite exact since "Orientals are not Europeans. . . ." The Queen, who certainly was not prepared to discuss English methods of Colonial expansion

with her daughter married to a Prussian, refrained from replying to this effusion, but she did not forget "Vicky's" insinuations and, when some years later the Crown Princess wrote to her mother urging England to occupy Egypt, the Queen's answer was not untinged with venom: "It is not *our* custom to annex Countries (as it is in *some others*)," she replied. Then perhaps her mind turned from the iniquities of Prussian behaviour in Europe to the immense Empire of Britain built up in all parts of the world during her forty years' reign, for the Queen added as a prudent afterthought: "unless we are obliged."

Despite the active support of the Prince of Wales and the tacit sympathy of Queen Victoria, the "Blind King" spent the remainder of his life in exile, living in a small house at Hietzing in the neighbourhood of Vienna. Here he continued to assert his just claim to the throne of Hanover until his death on June 12th., 1878, which happened when he was visiting Paris. It was a curious but appropriate coincidence that his chief supporter in exile, the Prince of Wales, was by chance in Paris at the time of his death and the Prince gladly seized the opportunity of showing his sympathy with the person and cause of his dead cousin. The King of Hanover had died in a house in the Rue Pressbourg and the funeral procession, attended by a French military escort, passed through the Champs Elysées to the Lutheran Church in the Rue Chauchat. At the head of the



" . . . A WOMAN OF GREAT CHARM AND CONSIDERABLE CULTURE"

PRINCESS FREDERICA OF HANOVER IN 1876

procession, by the side of the dead King's son, walked the Prince of Wales.

King George V. of Hanover had married Princess Mary of Saxe-Altenburg, who survived him until 1907, and had two children, Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland (1845-1923) and Princess Frederica (1848-1926). The Duke married Princess Thyra of Denmark, a sister of the Princess of Wales, in the same year as his father died, whose example he followed at first by vigorously protesting against the Prussian annexation of Hanover. But when the Emperor, William II., anxious to weaken the opportunities of his uncle "Bertie" to interfere in German family affairs, agreed in 1892 to restore to him in full the confiscated "Welfen-Fonds," the Duke of Cumberland withdrew all claim to the Kingdom of Hanover. Bitterness, however, remained on both sides and a complete reconciliation between the houses of Hohenzollern and Hanover did not take place until 1913 when the Emperor's only daughter Victoria Louise, married Ernest Augustus Duke of Brunswick and Lüneburg, who was the only son of the Duke of Cumberland.

The "Blind King's" only daughter, Princess Frederica, was a woman of great charm and considerable culture. She had, however, the misfortune to offend the Prince of Wales. It has already been remarked how the Prince, preferring his Hanoverian to his Coburg ancestry, had warmly espoused the cause of his deposed cousin

George, and it was therefore a great disappointment to him when Princess Frederica announced her intention of marrying her father's former equerry Luitbert, Freiherr von Pawell-Rammingen. Although it was not known if the Prince had indicated to his cousin his choice of a more suitable husband, undoubtedly he felt that Princess Frederica had weakened the Hanoverian case against Prussia by her decision to marry a commoner. The proof of the Prince's displeasure was given when he absented himself from the marriage ceremony which took place at Windsor Castle on April 24., 1880, by special permission of Queen Victoria. It was indeed unusual if not unique, that the Prince of Wales should withhold his approval of a marriage which had received the consent of the Queen.

Princess Frederica will be chiefly remembered as a distinguished hostess at Biarritz during the Edwardian period. There the Princess entertained a most cosmopolitan society, and she took considerable pleasure in pointing out to her numerous friends the actual sofa in her villa on which King Alfonso XIII. of Spain had proposed to Princess Victoria Eugenia of Battenberg.

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER FOUR

"I am going to find out whether there is not something to be done in Africa."

KING LEOPOLD II. TO MONSIEUR LAMBERMONT

September, 1875

THERE were other cousins to whom the Prince of Wales was not so attached as he was to King George of Hanover. In particular he viewed with little sympathy the personal characteristics and later political activities of his first cousin once removed, King Leopold II. of the Belgians. This monarch, who came to the throne in 1865, was thirty years old at the time of his accession and, in common with his cousin the Prince of Wales, he had been sternly repressed in his youth in accordance with the fashion of the age. In both cases, the ultimate results of such treatment might have caused their respective fathers to wonder whether repression was the ideal basis for the education of young men.

Leopold II. was the eldest son of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha who, in 1831, became the first King of the Belgians. I have dealt elsewhere

with the life of this remarkable man* and here it can only be recorded that the first Leopold was the brother of the Duchess of Kent and therefore the uncle of both Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort, and that he was one of the most successful Kings in the history of monarchy. His character was distinguished by courage, foresight, a thirst for power and a highly developed sexual appetite, all of which traits were inherited by his son. Leopold II.'s mother, Princess Louise-Marie of Orléans, was the eldest daughter of Louis Philippe, King of the French. She had been married for purely dynastic reasons to a man who neither loved her nor respected her feelings. Her short life of less than forty years was in consequence lonely and miserable. She was virtuous, domestic, unselfish and devout. None of these characteristics were inherited by her son. On his father's side, therefore, Leopold II.'s lineage was German and Protestant, while on his mother's, he was directly descended from Louis XIV., with purely Catholic ancestors. The mixture of these two so distinct races and traditions produced, as was proper, a most brilliant and distinguished man, but also one whose character was vitiated by cruelty, selfishness, avarice and hypocrisy. On the whole, the Coburg blood prevailed.

The nurseries at the Royal Palace of Laeken,

* *Uncle Leopold. A life of the first King of the Belgians.* By Angus Holden.

near Brussels, were quiet and austere. Here the Duke of Brabant, Leopold II.'s title before his accession, was brought up with history and religion as his chief educational studies, in company with his brother Philip, Count of Flanders, who was the grandfather of the present King of the Belgians, and with his only sister Princess Charlotte, later to become the ill-fated Empress of Mexico. The whole family including Queen Louise-Marie lived in perpetual dread of the aloof and omniscient King Leopold I., to whom no one dared speak unless previously addressed, an occurrence both rare and alarming. As a boy, the Duke of Brabant was studious and serious-minded, but it was noticed with concern by his mother that he was singularly lacking in affection towards her and his family, while he never indulged in the normal pranks and follies of youth. Like his father, he was born with an old mind.

When Leopold was fifteen, his mother died in 1850, at the age of thirty-nine. The reactions of her relatives to her death were typical of each individual. Her husband King Leopold expressed academic sorrow and wrote smugly to his niece Queen Victoria: "Her death, like her life, was holy." The Queen, on the other hand, reacted in her usual hysterical manner, inevitable on the death of any relation. "What a day Tuesday must have been!" she wrote to her uncle King Leopold. "Welch einen Gang! And yesterday! . . . to talk of her is my great consolation! Let

us all try to imitate her!" The Prince Consort expressed his sentiments with less abandon. "The accounts of the last moments of our excellent Aunt are most touching," he wrote to a friend. But Leopold, Duke of Brabant, expressed no sentiments whatsoever.

When he had reached the age of eighteen Leopold's father, who until then had neglected him and left both his education and amusements in the hands of tutors, took a sudden interest in his welfare. Leopold was mildly surprised but he soon discovered the reason for the King's changed attitude towards him. He was now of a marriageable age and therefore of considerable importance to his father in the absorbing diversion of international politics. Naturally Leopold was not invited by the King to express any preference regarding a bride, nor would such an impertinent idea have ever crossed the young man's mind. He was merely informed by his father that the lady selected to be his wife was the Archduchess Marie Henriette, the daughter of the Archduke Joseph of Austria. She was seventeen. Leopold acquiesced as a matter of course and dutifully wrote to his future wife's first cousin, the young Emperor Francis Joseph: "Your Majesty, in consenting to our marriage, has fulfilled my dearest wishes and ensured the happiness of my life." The future was to prove that the Emperor of Austria's assent had by no means secured the happiness of the Archduchess.

Leopold first met his fiancée in Vienna, whither he had been accompanied by his father in 1853 after the announcement of their engagement. The King of the Belgians and his son were lavishly entertained by the Austrian Emperor and the elder Leopold thoroughly enjoyed himself. As the first sovereign of a new Kingdom, it was exhilarating to be received by the descendant of the Holy Roman Emperors in such a sumptuous and gracious manner. Several State balls were given in honour of the Belgian royalties to which, however, King Leopold considered too many guests had been invited since, when recounting to his niece Queen Victoria the details of this visit, he dwelt on the perennial complaint of the over-crowded ball-room, remarking: “. . . now at Vienna the dancing is . . . that general mêlée which renders waltzing most difficult.”

To the younger Leopold, both his reception in Vienna and the person of his fiancée were matters of equal unconcern. He was at that time suffering from indifferent health, having inherited weak lungs from his mother, and his passions remained unstirred by the presence of his future wife, despite her pretty face and figure and lively disposition. But the Arch-duchess Marie Henriette did not regard the prospect of marrying the Duke of Brabant with equal composure. She took an instant dislike to the hard and self-possessed young man, who scorned the follies and day-dreams of youth,

although, apart from an inelegant nose, Leopold had reasonable features and a well-formed physique. At that time he was clean-shaven and he wore his hair long and curled over the ears. He had not yet begun to grow that sable spade-shaped beard which in his later years became the popular toast in the more expensive brothels of Europe.

But mutual antipathy was no barrier to a dynastic alliance in the nineteenth century and shortly after their first meeting in Vienna Leopold and Marie Henriette became man and wife. The honeymoon, spent in travel, was a failure and foreshadowed the future matrimonial life of the Duchess of Brabant. Quarrels and tears were frequent. In Venice, for example, enchanted by her gondolier's serenade, she asked for an encore. Leopold forbade the man to sing again. Marie Henriette cried. In Cairo Leopold took his bride of eighteen to witness some lewd dancing. His undisguised delight in these erotic exhibitions excited her disgust and the Duchess asked to be spared further shame. Leopold ordered the dance to continue and his wife to remain. Not without reason, Marie Henriette cried again. But such humiliations, painful as they must have been to a young bride, were not so grave as to account for the heart-broken letter she wrote to an old friend, only four weeks after her marriage. "My poor Mother, dear Angel, is beginning to understand what she has done. If



"IF GOD RECEIVES ME INTO PARADISE, THENCE I SHALL WATCH
OVER BELGIUM"

*King Leopold II of the Belgians on his death-bed
1909*

KING LEOPOLD II OF THE BELGIANS IN 1873

God hears my prayers I shall not go on living much longer. . . .” It can only be inferred from this piteous sentence that Leopold was treating his wife with gross and calculating cruelty.

But the Duchess’ prayer to be released from her husband by death, remained unanswered for nearly fifty years and, for the decade following her marriage, she was compelled to submit to Leopold’s varying moods of neglect and brutality while he waited, with ill-concealed patience, for his father to die. For twelve more years Leopold was destined to remain Duke of Brabant and during this time his most serious occupation lay in making speeches in the Senate advocating the possession by Belgium of colonies and a navy. But little heed was paid to these harangues, for his father considered that both were superfluous, while he preferred to maintain Belgium’s European status by his own well-deserved reputation of a brilliant international statesman.

In consequence of his complete exclusion from state affairs, young Leopold often grew tired of Brussels and he spent much of his time at Ostend, where he would sit gazing across the sea for hours on end dreaming, perhaps, of the fleet he would build in its waters and of the colonies he would win for Belgium beyond the horizon. Oblivious to the presence of his wife and of his children playing around him, Leopold would yet be aroused from his reverie by the approach of his father whom he would greet with deference

and courtesy. The old King was never happier than when on a visit to Ostend where he could take his exercise on the front amongst his subjects, dressed in a shabby frock coat and beaver hat and inevitably armed with a pair of powerful field-glasses so that no pretty woman should elude his eager but fading sight. Both father and son appreciated Ostend, but while the former was content it should remain a fishing-village, the younger Leopold, in later life, was constantly encouraging its development and, in the first years of the twentieth century, even proposed to erect by the sea, for the further embellishment of Ostend, an exact replica of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. His death supervened before this bold scheme materialized.

In December, 1865, King Leopold 1st. of the Belgians died at Laeken Palace holding the hand of his daughter-in-law, the Duchess of Brabant, and attended to the end by his last mistress, Frau Meyer von Eppinghoven. Although now the ruler of his country and the master of its destiny, the new King had to play a waiting game for the first five years of his reign. After the Seven Weeks' war of 1866, Leopold was convinced that hostilities between Germany and France would not be long delayed and, overestimating the military strength of the Emperor Napoleon III., he feared for the independence of Belgium, in the eventuality of a French victory. He was, in consequence, much relieved by the

crushing defeat of France in 1870, and he now felt that the position of Belgium was sufficiently secure in Europe to warrant an attempt at expansion in more distant continents.

The political confusion and poverty in Spain in 1871 gave Leopold his first chance. He offered the Spanish Republic thirty million pounds sterling for a ninety years' suzerainty of the Philippines. This proposition was carefully and favourably considered by the Spanish Government, but unfortunately, before it could be accepted, the régime changed and King Alfonso XII. acceded to the throne. Naturally a restored monarchy could not sell colonies, particularly to a country the size of Belgium, so Leopold's offer was politely declined.

A few years later it suddenly occurred to the King of the Belgians that the continent of Africa might provide him with an opportunity for expansion. Other nations were certainly there before him; England, France, Portugal and Germany had already begun to stake their claims but Africa was still only half-explored and none of the great powers would be jealous, Leopold thought, of the colonizing activities of little Belgium. So in September, 1876, the King invited to Brussels the most celebrated geographers and explorers of Africa and proposed to them that an international committee should be formed to suppress the slave trade and to open up Central Africa to the benefits of European civilization.

“Association Internationale Africaine,” Leopold suggested should be the name of this committee and the “A.I.A.” for short, it was called.

The delegates to the conference were much impressed by the altruistic and humanitarian proposals of the King of the Belgians, little thinking that by means of the “A.I.A.” he would suppress the slave trade, only as carried on by others, and open up Central Africa for himself. Indeed Leopold had made a brilliant start. The word “international” sounded reassuring to foreign ears and the objects of the “A.I.A.” received enthusiastic support from a generation pleasantly engaged in making money under the cloak of philanthropy and in civilizing their coloured brethren by means of the Bible, the lash and a plentiful supply of alcohol. Even the usually sagacious Prince of Wales was deceived by his cousin’s activities and gladly accepted the Presidency of the English National Committee of the “A.I.A.,” although he blandly wondered if the general public would take the same interest as the King of the Belgians in this purely philanthropic undertaking. Delighted by this further success, Leopold turned to the congenial occupation of designing a flag for the “A.I.A.” He decided on a blue banner bearing a golden star. The blue symbolized the infinity of distance, the golden star was the emblem of hope.

The organization was now in existence through which the King intended to carry out his ambitious

plans, but for a few years the man and propitious circumstances were lacking to make an immediate start. But both arrived together in November, 1877, when the famous explorer H. M. Stanley, who was thought to have perished in equatorial Africa, suddenly reappeared, having traced the River Congo from source to mouth. Leopold was greatly excited by this news and when England, too occupied with Egypt, declined to take advantage of his discoveries, Stanley to the King's immense satisfaction offered to place his services at his disposal. A contract was hastily signed between Leopold and the explorer by which the latter became the managing clerk of the "A.I.A.," and Stanley returned to Africa where, in negotiations with the natives, he laid the foundations of the Congo State.

A description of the lengthy and complicated operations by which, through the brilliant activities of Stanley, King Leopold became the personal and sole possessor of a country covering a million square miles and peopled with twenty million negroes would be out of place here, but it is interesting to observe how Stanley won his ascendancy over the savage inhabitants of the Congo. Without the co-operation of the Chiefs it was clearly impossible to collect the rich harvest of rubber and ivory, as the climate prohibited white labour. So Stanley, approaching each Chief in turn with suitable presents, explained to them the power of the white man in times of danger.

and his usefulness in settling the Chief's disputes. To obtain these benefits, Stanley informed them, all that was necessary was to put their individual mark to a curious white substance they had never seen before but which they were to learn, in due time, was called paper. By this simple subterfuge, Stanley persuaded four hundred and fifty independent African Chiefs to cede to the "A.I.A." all rights over their lands and the people of their tribes.

This was a great achievement, but Leopold realized that if one of these treaties signed with the Chiefs were to find its way to Europe, it might appear that instead of abolishing slavery he was merely transferring the slave-trade from the Chiefs' into his own hands—which in fact was the case. So a decree was issued in the Congo enjoining every native to pay a tax, varying from six to twenty-four francs a head. Any nigger unable to pay this tax (and not one in a thousand had ever seen a franc) would be compelled to pay his tax in kind, which meant with the work of his body. After all, in Europe everyone had to pay taxes; why should the negro be exempt? And if he had no money, surely he should not complain when required to substitute for a justifiable tax a specified rate of manual labour? Thus Leopold reasoned to the satisfaction of his conscience.

Having thus through the craft of Stanley, secured a firm grip over the bodies of the blacks,

Leopold turned to deal with his European competitors. France had been the first to dispute the King's claim to the Congo, and Portugal, holding Angola to the south, asked England to guarantee her rights by treaty. The English Government concurred, and offered her a treaty which greatly encroached on the territory of Leopold who, being now afraid of losing the bulk of his possessions, joined with France and Germany in protesting against the proposed agreement. At this point Prince Bismarck intervened, and summoned a conference to meet in Berlin in November, 1884, to settle the Congo controversy on a permanent basis.

The conference met and Leopold scored the greatest triumph of his career. France and Germany, he knew, were jealous of English and Portuguese expansion in Africa, while England was determined on no account to allow the French to increase their territory at anyone else's expense. Fortunately nobody was envious or afraid of Belgium, a small and inoffensive power, and it was through this comparative insignificance that Leopold won. England, at last, through jealousy of France, supported the King's claims to possession and, on February 15., 1885, a convention was signed formally recognizing the Belgian Congo State. The Prince of Wales was one of the first to congratulate his cousin on the successful issue of the conference and if the Prince, in common with most European states-

men, entertained any doubts as to whether the African territory was to belong to Belgium or to her King, he had only to wait until August 1st. of the same year, when Leopold informed all the Governments of the civilized world that he was the sovereign of the Congo Free State. The lie of the "A.I.A." had at last been laid to rest.

Having thus brilliantly overcome both the local and European obstacles to his sole possession of the Congo, it only remained for King Leopold to enrich himself at leisure. He had under his personal control the largest private estate in the world. Nevertheless for several years he was unable to derive from the Congo a large enough dividend to repay the interest on the loans he had raised for development. In 1894, the situation became so serious that Leopold was compelled to make a choice which for most human beings could only have been decided in one way; his own undoing as Sovereign of the Congo Free State, or the ruin of the millions of negroes whose lives he held in his hands. Without hesitation he chose the latter course and, as a consequence, he is generally regarded as the most brutal and callous king of modern European history.

Until 1894, the Congo officials had gone to the Chiefs demanding the labour they required and the latter had handed over to them such slaves as they owned, although, of course, it was

supposed in Europe that Leopold had abolished slavery. However, to safeguard himself against discovery, the King had decreed that slaves thus taken over by the Free State (the word "free" was most soothing to liberal ears), were thereby "enfranchised." In practice, the enfranchisement meant that the slaves handed over their bodies to the tender mercies of Leopold's officials until, broken by the heavy burdens they were forced to carry and by the cruel lash of the hippopotamus-hide whips, they were of no further use to themselves or to anyone else.

But cruel as this system was, it proved inadequate to find enough labour and, in consequence insufficient profits were made by the King. Swarms of niggers were running away into the wilderness; many, pathetically, were burning the rubber-vines, hoping thereby to return to the happy days when the white man was unknown, and the chiefs were, in consequence, unable to find the men demanded by the Congo officials. Much embittered by the news of these evasions, the King decreed from Brussels that in future the Chiefs, if unable to supply labour, would have to work themselves, that the wives and children of fugitives would be seized as hostages, and that armed black soldiers would be imported from distant tribes to enforce the provision of labour and to carry out punitive expeditions when this was not done. Leopold added the prudent proviso to his decree that great care would have to be

taken to behave with moderation in districts inhabited by foreign consuls or missionaries.

Thus was initiated a real reign of terror in the Congo lasting for fifteen years, during which time the population of the Free State was reduced from twenty to ten million negroes, and the King of the Belgians made a profit from rubber of four hundred gold millions. In order to secure this highly satisfactory yield, the atrocities committed in the name of King Leopold were unparalleled in modern times. The evidence given later before international commissions proved that the black soldiers sent on punitive expeditions were compelled to show, for every cartridge used, the right hand of a nigger. This was directed in order to avoid waste, which Leopold particularly abhorred. If any soldier wished to shoot game for food he was therefore obliged to cut off an additional hand of a living man. On the Majombo river in six months, six hundred cartridges were used which certainly meant that at least an equivalent number of negroes had been murdered since, in order to save ammunition, children were brained by the soldiers with their rifle butts. It would be tedious and disgusting to enumerate further details of the murders, inhuman floggings, arson and rape which occurred in the Free State between 1894 and 1908, and naturally, despite the care taken that missionaries and consuls should be kept unaware of the true state of affairs, ultimately these persons

wrote home to their respective governments describing the atrocities committed in the Congo.

The English conscience reacted first and most vigorously when these horrors became generally known. As early as 1896, the enterprising Sir Charles Dilke asked a question in the House of Commons, regarding the management of the Free State, to which inevitably, an evasive reply was given. The Boer War then intervened to give the British public something more personal to think about, but at the end of 1903 the storm broke in earnest and, curiously enough, it was the Irish patriot Roger Casement, then British Consul at Bona, who was responsible. His White Book on the Congo Free State horrified Europe. An international commission went out to Africa to investigate, public meetings of protest were held all over England, an outraged Anglican Bishop referred to the "terrible blot upon the name of Christianity," and *Punch* published a cartoon showing a negro in the coils of a large snake, which wore a white beard and a royal crown.

The King of the Belgians, infuriated by the impertinent interference of Europe into his private affairs, was determined to fight all his critics, even his own Government which, after the scandal of the King's mismanagement became known, proposed to take the Congo off his hands. Courage was Leopold's one redeeming quality. He managed to prevent the findings of the inter-

national commission being published, he temporized with his Government, and he played off one European power against another. This required skill in view of the hatred and contempt he had inspired, although France was as determined as ever that England should not be established in the Congo and Germany was most anxious at that time to propitiate Belgium, in view of a possible war in Europe. Then in January, 1908, a most unexpected and embittering blow fell on the King's head. His cousin Edward, now King of England, who had at first been so anxious that he should succeed in the Congo, came down unequivocally on the side of his enemies. In his Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament, after referring to the widespread concern in Great Britain regarding the treatment of the negroes in the Congo, King Edward continued: "I am confident that the negotiations now in progress between the Sovereign of the Congo Free State and the Belgian Government will produce satisfactory results."

King Leopold had long been aware of the fact, to which he was profoundly indifferent, that he was the most hated man in Europe, but after that allusion to the Congo in the speech from the throne, which showed the determination of the King and people of England that his personal rule there should end, he realized that it was useless to continue the struggle. Deserted by his brother

monarchs, his own ministers, even by his cousin "Bertie," the King of the Belgians at last surrendered. On May 5., 1908, he renounced the royal domain in the Congo and handed over his vast dominion to Belgium.

The legitimate odium attached to Leopold's name, owing to the publicity given to the Congo atrocities, had been considerably increased by the general knowledge of the King's immorality and of his callous behaviour towards his wife. The unhappy early married life of the Duke and Duchess of Brabant, owing to their mutual antipathy and the harsh and cynical treatment she received at his hands, have already been mentioned and their relations were not improved when, to Leopold's disgust, his wife gave birth to a daughter in 1857. Two years later, however, a son and heir was born which satisfied Leopold, without endearing him to his wife, but after the birth of a second daughter in 1864, so intense was Leopold's indignation that he withdrew from the connubial bed. No doubt Marie Henriette now imagined, with satisfaction, that she would be left unmolested for the rest of her married life. But in 1869 their only son died. Leopold was sincerely distressed, particularly as he was now King and a male heir was essential unless his brother, the Count of Flanders, was to succeed. Bastard sons, rumour said, Leopold possessed in abundance, but as these were worthless for the succession, he turned with a vile and

feigned affection to his wife. Marie Henriette might be of use to him again. Three years passed; it was a disgusting interlude, and then in 1872 a third daughter was born. Mercifully for the Queen it was the end of their relations together. Leopold never touched her again.

Sometimes the King and Queen of the Belgians had to meet on State occasions or, if compelled to stay in the same house for an official visit, at Mass on Sundays. Leopold, although entirely indifferent to his religion, realized the political value of attending church in his devoutly Catholic country. But on these occasions he would, whenever possible, take with him his terrier "Squib," to whom he was far more attached than to any member of his family. While Mass was being said, to which the King paid outward attention, "Squib" would sit on his knees, enjoying the caresses of his master who would glance from time to time through his eyeglass in the Queen's direction, delighted at her obvious disapproval of his irreverent behaviour.

But after 1872, it was rare for Leopold and Marie Henriette even to attend Mass together, since the latter lived apart from her husband, usually in her small house at Spa. Here the Queen attempted to form her own Court, but owing to the small income allowed her by the King and her own uncertainty of temper it was sparsely and reluctantly attended. Proud of her superficial appreciation of the arts, she tried to



"IF GOD HEARS MY PRAYERS, I SHALL NOT GO ON LIVING MUCH
LONGER"

Queen Marie Henriette to her Mother
1853

QUEEN MARIE HENRIETTE OF THE BELGIANS IN 1873

form, with some success, a circle of second-rate musicians and painters. Naturally amorous and longing for the affection denied her by her husband and children, the Queen discreetly allowed herself the luxury of an occasional lover. The hatred she felt for Leopold destroyed her love for their children and made her old age even more solitary. When in the Nineties, the Congo scandal became public property, Marie Henriette was delighted and longed for the humiliation of the King. But her desire for revenge was never gratified. In 1902, the Queen of the Belgians died at Spa. Not one of her children attended her death-bed and her husband, living at Ostend with a mistress, declined to interrupt his holiday. But perhaps, for once, the King was unconsciously respecting his wife's feelings. Marie Henriette can hardly have desired to die in the arms of her husband.

The estrangement between the husband and wife was similar, with one exception, to that between each parent and the children. The lives of the three daughters of this tragic couple were led, from adolescence, without parental love or control. Louise, the eldest, named after her pious grandmother Queen Louise-Marie, was a wild, pretty and fair-haired child. It had been rumoured that at the age of ten, she was caught by her father carrying a love-letter from her mother to an admirer and that, when the brave girl declined to give up the letter, her father

hated her for the rest of his life. As it is impossible to imagine Leopold, or indeed any parent, not taking the letter from his daughter by force, that moral tale can only have rested on slender foundations, but it is as probable as the story that Louise's future husband, Prince Philip of Coburg, had originally desired to seduce her mother, but that the latter being unwilling gave Louise to him instead, as a wife.

Anyhow, Louise was married at seventeen to her Coburg cousin, who was the son of Prince Augustus of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha and Princess Clémentine of Orléans, the daughter of King Louis Philippe. The Prince was therefore the first cousin of her father King Leopold, and was fourteen years older than his wife. After marriage, they lived alternately in Vienna and Budapest, but Louise made no pretence of being fond of her husband, who taught her to drink to excess and introduced her to pornographic literature. She, in return, took acute pleasure in annoying Prince Philip by gross extravagance and, after a few years of unhappy matrimony, Louise became the mistress of a Hungarian Count called Mat-tachich. As the scandalized Emperor turned them out of Austria and Leopold, assuming the outlook of an outraged and virtuous parent, declined to allow them to live in Belgium, the two lovers existed as best they could at different seaside resorts.

Unfortunately the Count's purse was soon

unable to keep such an expensive mistress and they were forced to resort to money-lenders whose bills Louise backed by forging the name of her sister Stéphanie, the Crown Princess of Austria. At one time she even contemplated writing to her cousin Queen Victoria, to ask her for an adequate income on which she and her lover could live, but she was eventually persuaded that such a bold proceeding would be unlikely to meet with the success it deserved. At length, half crazy with drink and desire, Louise was flung by the authorities into a Saxon lunatic asylum and, at the same time, Mattachich was degraded from his military rank and sentenced to six years' imprisonment in a penitentiary. But the Count was released before he had finished his sentence and Louise, having escaped from her asylum, was able to spend a few more wild years with her lover before he died. After his death, the Princess lived the life of a beggar, bringing endless but unsuccessful lawsuits against her relatives. During the Great War, poor Louise was persecuted by the Belgians for being a Hungarian and by the Germans for being a Belgian, and later by the Bolsheviks for the enormity of being a Princess. She died in a boarding-house, penniless, unattended and unknown.

The life of her younger sister Stéphanie was also spent after marriage in Vienna, when she became the wife of the Crown Prince Rudolph

of Austria. Although at first delighted with his pretty bride, Rudolph soon ceased to love her, complaining of her obstinate and jealous nature and of her exaggerated interest in fashion and Court etiquette. Certainly Stéphanie had cause to be jealous when her husband fell deeply in love with Baroness Mary Vetsera and ostentatiously kept her in Vienna as his mistress. Supported by her father-in-law the Emperor, the Crown Princess followed her husband everywhere, insulting the Baroness and making frequent and violent scenes in public places. But Rudolph was in earnest. He wished to be divorced from Stéphanie, to marry Mary Vetsera and to live in happy seclusion, far from politics and the Hofburg, in the company of the woman he loved. But naturally such unorthodox desires could not be fulfilled by the Crown Prince of Austria, so one morning at his hunting-box at Mayerling near Vienna, after a night of love and orgy, the lovers made a pact of death together; Rudolph shot Mary Vetsera through the heart and then blew out his own brains.

Stéphanie thus found herself at the age of twenty-five a widowed Crown Princess, deprived of all influence in Vienna and of all hope of becoming Empress of Austria. Naturally her father King Leopold, had no desire for her to return to Brussels, having no use for returned goods, so Stéphanie remained in Vienna, loath to abandon the court life, to which she was so

ardently attached. But eventually the question of her precedence as the widow of the Crown Prince, became so heated and involved that she married a Hungarian called Count Lonyay, thus securing in middle age and in humbler circumstances the happiness withheld in her exalted youth.

Princess Clémentine, the youngest of King Leopold's daughters, although enraging her father by the incidence of her sex at birth, became, as a woman, the only member of his family whose company and personality he found tolerable. Tactful and unassuming, Clémentine managed to get on comparatively well with both her mother and father, although the position of "gooseberry" with Leopold and a mistress, a part she was often expected to play, must have hurt the pride of this dignified and unselfish Princess. In early life, a marriage had been arranged for her with the Crown Prince Humbert of Italy, but when the Catholic party in Belgium voiced its objection to the Princess being married to the son of King Victor Emmanuel, who had destroyed the temporal power of the Pope, the proposed match had to be abandoned.

But King Leopold was unmoved by this rebuff to his daughter. By now he had come to depend on her company and it looked well, in the eyes of his subjects and of Europe in general, that he should be on speaking terms with at least one member of his family. In consequence, when in

the late Nineties Princess Clémentine fell in love with Prince Napoleon, the grandson of King Jerome of Westphalia, and asked her father's permission to marry him, Leopold declined to allow her on the specious grounds that such a union would upset his cordial relations with the French Republic. Actually by that date, Bonapartism was no danger whatsoever to the Republic, the leaders of which would have been entirely disinterested by the proposed marriage, but Leopold found his daughter useful and wanted her at his side, so the question of her happiness did not arise. Few parent-ridden children have deserved their reward more than Princess Clémentine of the Belgians. During her father's life she held her soul in patience and after his death, she married the man she loved.

Apart from his wife and three daughters, King Leopold had only one close female relation, his sister Princess Charlotte. In 1857 she had married the Archduke Maximilian of Austria who, seven years later, became Emperor of Mexico. In 1865, Empress Charlotte returned to Europe in a vain attempt to secure money and troops to save her husband's Empire from the Mexican rebels. The story is well-known of how the distracted Charlotte thought that the orangeade given her by the Empress Eugénie was poisoned, and of how she plunged her fingers in the breakfast coffee of the startled Pope, as a prelude to her refusal to leave the Vatican, where she actually

spent the night in the company of two nuns. It was a curious coincidence that in the same year that Leopold succeeded to the throne, 1865, his only sister should have become totally insane. But far from being an encumbrance to her brother, Leopold was able to turn Charlotte's insanity into an asset. Shut up, a raving lunatic in the Château Bouchout near Brussels, her expenses were small and Leopold used the bulk of her fortune for furthering his plans to "suppress the Slave Trade and to open up Central Africa to the benefits of Western civilization."

Despite King Leopold's deplorable relations with his family and his profligate life, he always managed to keep on excellent terms with his first cousin Queen Victoria and, until the Congo atrocities became public, with the Prince of Wales. Of his private life the Queen would, no doubt, be unaware and she was pleased by the flattering letters he sent her whenever British arms were successful abroad. He congratulated her fulsomely after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir in 1882 and rejoiced at French jealousy over the achievements of the English in Egypt. In 1890, he came all the way to Balmoral in order to greet Queen Victoria on her seventy-first birthday, and he presented her with a basket of orchids from his hot-houses at Laeken. Five years later he visited her again, when he took the opportunity of conferring with Lord Salisbury. At this interview the King informed the astonished

Prime Minister that, in his opinion, England should evacuate Egypt as soon as possible and, in its place, annex China to the British Empire, an operation which Leopold asserted, could be carried out with little expense and without shedding a drop of English blood. What reasons the King may have had for talking such nonsense naturally remained obscure to Lord Salisbury who, however, when referring to this conversation remarked: "He is at some mischief," and modestly added: "I don't suppose he thought so badly of me as to imagine I took all this seriously."

Queen Victoria was fortunately dead by the time Leopold's complicity in the Congo atrocities, as well as some of the more lurid details of his private life, became widely known. She would have been profoundly shocked by such a lack of connubial virtue in the son of her revered "Uncle Leopold" and in the first cousin of her beloved Albert. "Margot" was the great favourite in the late Eighties and was popularly known as the "Queen of the Congo." The King drove about with her in Brussels in an open royal landau. She was followed in Leopold's affections by two women called Otero and Alençon, who were succeeded in their turn by a delightful young dancer named Cléo de Mérode, to whom Leopold owed his witty nickname of Cléopold. But if Queen Victoria was ignorant of the existence of these ladies, his Belgian subjects were only too well aware of the part they played in

their King's life. Resentment was inevitably widespread and, on one occasion, the greatly-daring parish priest of Ostend ventured to remark, when dining with Leopold: "The word has gone round that Your Majesty has a mistress." The King looked shocked and incredulous at such a suggestion and replied: "Could *you* believe such a thing?" The priest was naturally confused and said nothing, at which Leopold continued: "Well, Monsieur le Curé, I was told the same story about you yesterday, but *I* did not believe it!"

All his life the King had indulged in his carnal desires without apparent remorse, but never once had he been in love. That cruel irony of fate was reserved for him until he was nearly seventy. In 1902, he was sitting in the lounge of a Paris hotel, when through it there walked a pretty dark girl called Caroline Lacroix, the venal daughter of a hall porter. Until recently she had been on the streets, but she was now living with an impecunious French officer. From that moment until his death, seven years later, the King was held body and soul by this common brunette. For the first time in his life, Leopold experienced the delirious happiness and racking torments of love. But in the character of Caroline, he was extremely unfortunate, since she was an irascible, nagging and low-minded creature, not in the least awed by being the King's mistress. Their quarrels were loud and incessant and not confined to the privacy of the bedroom. The big hotels

of France and Germany echoed with their vulgar brawls. But Leopold adored her and he wallowed in the public abuse she showered on his head.

In 1906, the Baroness Vaughan, as Caroline styled herself for reasons unknown, gave birth to a son. The world laughed and said Leopold was "cocu," but the King was convinced he was the father, since the child had a typical Coburg face and was short of one finger, a defect which often occurs in the children of old men. Leopold had the boy christened Philippe, perhaps after his great-grandfather Louis Philippe King of the French. If that surmise is correct, it would have been a cynical gesture, one after Leopold's heart.

But this blissful existence was all too short. In 1909, the King of the Belgians was on his death-bed. The day of reckoning had come for him at last, not only with his Creator, but also with the Church whose moral precepts he had so arrogantly despised all his life. Leopold asked for the Last Sacraments, but Cardinal Mercier informed him that before they could be administered, the penitent would have to regularize his illicit union with Baroness Vaughan by the additional Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The King agreed. It was a fitting climax to Leopold's life which had been such a strange mixture of success and failure, grandeur and vice, that on his death-bed, at the command of the Church, he should have made a prostitute his wife.

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER FIVE

"How I do long for one good roar of the British Lion from the housetops, and for the thunder of a British broadside."

THE CROWN PRINCESS OF PRUSSIA

TO QUEEN VICTORIA

December 17., 1877

CHILD marriage was nearly as general amongst nineteenth-century royalties as the dissolution of marriage by divorce, in less exalted circles, is prevalent to-day. In consequence, no astonishment was shown in the Courts of Europe when it was rumoured that Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, the Princess Royal, had become engaged at the age of fifteen to Prince Frederick of Hohenzollern, the heir to the Prussian Throne. Of "Vicky" or "Pussy," as this young lady was alternatively called, it has been related in an earlier chapter, how she sat down on a wasps' nest at Balmoral in 1852, an event to be followed three years later by that ride up Craig-na-Ban, when Prince Frederick proposed to the Princess Royal who, at that time, was only fourteen.

The alliance naturally received the approval of the Queen and the Prince Consort, otherwise "Fritz" would never have been given the opportunity to "speak" to "Vicky," while the fact that the proposed marriage was frowned on by the pro-Russian Court at Berlin, appeared to indicate that Prince Frederick, who was nine years older than the Princess Royal, was genuinely attached to his youthful fiancée. Their engagement, however, was kept a close secret for the following six months, not on account of the tender years of the Princess, but because of the impropriety of announcing her betrothal before she was even confirmed. Indeed both the Queen and the Prince Consort were distressed by the possibility that "Vicky's" pious sentiments before confirmation might be seriously disturbed by speculations on the pleasures of matrimony. But the obvious advantages of a match with the future King of Prussia were sufficient to overrule such ephemeral scruples. Her confirmation was accordingly accelerated by six months and, in April, 1856, the engagement of the Princess Royal was announced by the Queen.

Although "Vicky" and "Fritz" were now officially betrothed, the former was still only fifteen and nearly two years had to elapse before the wedding which the Prince Consort, with his usual prudence, had decreed, could not possibly take place before his daughter was seventeen. During the two years Prince Frederick paid several

visits to England when the Queen considered it her duty to play the part of the discreet but unsleeping chaperon, "which takes so much of my precious time." The young couple were now deeply in love with one another and the Queen wrote to her uncle King Leopold, in June, 1856: "Every spare moment Vicky has . . . is devoted to her bridegroom who is so much in love that . . . he is not satisfied, and says he has not seen her, unless he can have her an hour to himself, when I am naturally bound to be acting as chaperon." It cannot have been very satisfying for Prince Frederick to have had the Princess Royal "for an hour to himself," in the presence of the Queen. Indeed such precautions, although fashionable and therefore inevitable at that period, were probably unnecessary in the case of "Vicky" and "Fritz," since the former admitted that, even after marriage, when they found themselves alone in the red-brocade drawing-room overlooking the Long Walk at Windsor, they were "almost too shy to talk to one another."

An unexpected controversy took place between the English and Prussian Courts in October, 1856, three months before the marriage actually took place. King Frederick William IV., who was about to take leave of his senses, strongly urged, through his advisers, that the heir of the Hohenzollerns should be married in Berlin. Queen Victoria was outraged by this audacious suggestion: "Whatever may be the usual practice

of Prussian Princes," she wrote angrily to her Foreign Minister, "it is not every day that one marries the eldest daughter of the Queen of England." This self-evident assertion was followed by the command: "The question therefore must be considered as settled and closed."

This problem having been thus drastically determined, the Queen turned her attention to the clothes to be worn at the marriage ceremony and sent a request to the Prussian Court that German ladies attending it should refrain from wearing their crinolines, since these contraptions were not the fashion in England. As the steel-hooped crinoline had only recently been invented by the Parisian dressmakers, it is probable that in the winter of 1856, they had not yet penetrated into London Society, although two years later they were general throughout Europe. In any case, it was clearly undesirable that the ladies should appear in crinolines in the confined area of the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace, although had they been equipped with the "Crinoline Magique," all difficulties of space would easily have been overcome. This brilliant invention of a certain Monsieur Delirac possessed a small handle in front which enabled the wearer to increase or diminish the volume of her crinoline at will. A unique spectacle would have been afforded by the ladies of the English and Prussian Courts, shutting up like sunshades on entering the Chapel Royal.

The Princess Royal, on marrying, left behind her in the royal schoolrooms and nurseries eight brothers and sisters, the eldest of whom was the Prince of Wales, exactly nine months her junior, whilst the youngest was Princess Beatrice who was only born in 1857, one year before her eldest sister's marriage to Prince Frederick of Prussia. Princess Beatrice, being the youngest daughter, was a great favourite with the Queen who was greatly distressed at the thought of losing her when, in 1884, she became engaged to Prince Henry of Battenberg, the third son of Prince Alexander of Hesse and his morganatic wife Countess Hauke, who had been given the title of Countess of Battenberg in 1851.

Queen Victoria referred to the engagement of Princess Beatrice to "Liko," as Prince Henry was known in his family, in her Journal on December 29., 1884: "I let Liko know, to come up after tea, and I saw him in dear Albert's room. Then I called the dear child and gave them my blessing." Princess Beatrice was married on July 23., 1885, at Whippingham Church in the Isle of Wight and her mother described the wedding scene in her Journal. "It was very touching," she wrote. "I stood very close to my dear child, who looked very sweet, pure, and calm. Though I stood for the ninth time near a child and for the fifth time near a daughter, at the altar, I think I never felt more deeply than I did on this occasion . . . when the Blessing

had been given, I tenderly embraced my darling 'Baby.' ”

To the great happiness of the Queen, Princess Beatrice of Battenberg spent with her mother most of her married life, which ended sadly in 1896 with the death of Prince Henry. He was returning from the Ashanti expedition and died at sea. In 1917, the family name of Battenberg was changed to Mountbatten and Princess Beatrice's eldest son Prince Alexander, was created Marquis of Carisbrooke. There were two younger sons and one daughter Victoria Eugenia, the Queen of Spain.

To return to the Princess Royal; her wedding was solemnized on January 25., 1858, when she was conducted to the altar by her father and her great-uncle King Leopold I. of the Belgians. After a brief honeymoon of two days at Windsor Castle, the Prince and Princess Frederick left for Berlin, where the latter was received with sincere enthusiasm by the people and with deep distrust by the Court and society of Prussia. The dislike of the "English marriage" made by the Prince, owing to the pro-Russian attitude of the Court and a general distrust of English democratic methods of government, had become so pronounced on their arrival from London, that the English Minister and his wife, Lord and Lady Bloomfield, made a point of avoiding Princess Frederick in order not to cause umbrage to the King and Queen of Prussia. Count Bis-



"I AM PERPETUALLY IN A PUGILISTIC FRAME OF MIND"

*Crown Princess to Queen Victoria
January 1878*



marck in particular was most critical of the marriage, not only because of his fear of English interference in Prussian affairs, through the medium of Princess Frederick but also, since he was well aware of the snobbish attitude of most Germans towards the individual Englishman. "Every Berliner feels exalted when a real English jockey . . . speaks to him," the Count wrote to a friend in 1858, "and gives him an opportunity of breaking the Queen's English on a wheel. What will it be like when the first lady in the land is an Englishwoman?"

The position of this girl of seventeen in a foreign Court, surrounded by distrust and jealousy was far from enviable, yet unfortunately, the Princess Frederick not only did nothing to allay the suspicion she inspired, but on the contrary, by intemperate comments and lack of circumspection, she increased the animosity of the Court and the Royal Family. Unusually gifted and highly educated by her father the Prince Consort, the Princess imported into Berlin the English liberal principles of her day and, being a keen and clever student of foreign politics, she regarded it as a pleasurable duty to air her democratic views and knowledge of foreign affairs. Such behaviour was naturally deeply resented in Prussian society where, apart from a hearty disapproval of the Princess's opinions, it was considered immodest and meddlesome for ladies even to entertain views on subjects which were

clearly the province of men. The three K's, which governed the conduct of all good German women, were not sufficient to absorb the activities of Princess Frederick. To "Kinder," "Küche," and "Kirche" she always paid her wholehearted attention although with her children the Princess was not uniformly successful, but she had no intention of becoming the typical "Hausfrau," to please a people whose stupidity and complacency she despised.

Such uncompromising opinions and strength of character contrasted strangely with her girlish and unassuming appearance and was a source of constant surprise to her new countrymen. According to Countess Hohenthal her lady-in-waiting, Princess Frederick, during her first years in Germany, "appeared extraordinary young. All the childish roundness still clung to her and made her look shorter than she really was. . . . Her eyes were what struck me most; the iris was green like the sea on a sunny day . . . the nose was unusually small and turned up slightly, and the complexion was ruddy, perhaps too much so for one thing, but it gave the idea of perfect strength and health." She had, according to her lady-in-waiting, "a very gentle and almost timid manner. . . ." So far the description of the Princess harmonized little with her character, but Countess Hohenthal also gave two valuable indications of her strength of mind. "The fault of the face lay in the squareness of the lower

features and there was even a look of determination about the chin." As well as this sure evidence of a resolute, if not obstinate, character, the Countess declared that the Princess cared little for the fashions of the day, often an indication of culture amongst women. Her hair, it was recorded, she wore drawn off her forehead, while "she was dressed in a fashion long disused on the continent," appearing on one occasion in a "plum-coloured silk dress fastened at the back."

Apart from the uncongenial political atmosphere of the Prussian Court, where it was said that "the very approach of a tory or reactionary seemed to freeze her up," Princess Frederick was frankly bored by its stiffness and formality and by the interminable ceremonies at which she was compelled to assist. The English Court at this time, contrasted most favourably with the Prussian, a fact which the Princess was not slow to point out. The atmosphere of the former was intelligent, inquiring and innocently gay, although a high moral tone was strictly enforced. The death of the Prince Consort had not yet thrown that pall of gloom over Windsor and Buckingham Palace, which was to stifle Court life in England for forty years. Princess Frederick also maintained that the apartments in the old Schloss at Berlin, in which she and her husband were housed, were uncomfortable, dark and unhygienic compared to those to which she was accustomed at home,

but all her plans for improvement were thwarted by the conservative prejudices of the mad King of Prussia, Frederick William IV. Again, the Princess frequently complained of the lack of even portable baths and of the thin silver she was compelled to use, while for some unknown reason, the shape of German boots particularly exasperated her.

In the spring of 1858, the dreary existence of the Princess Frederick was enlivened by a change of residence when she and the Prince moved into the Castle of Babelsberg, which lies on a wooded hill about three miles from Potsdam. Early in June the Prince Consort came to visit his daughter in her new home. His stay must have proved strenuous for the Princess since, in a letter to Queen Victoria, her father wrote: "I have had long talks with them both, singly and together, which gave me the greatest satisfaction." Two months later, the Queen and Prince Albert paid a joint visit to Babelsberg when the former wrote in her Journal a delightful description of the Castle: "Everything there is very small, a Gothic *bijou*, full of furniture and flowers (creepers), which they arrange very prettily round screens, and lamps and pictures. There are many irregular turrets and towers and steps."

In the late autumn of 1858, a further move was made and Princess Frederick, reluctantly leaving Babelsberg, took up her official residence in the palace in Unter den Linden which, after

the succession of her father-in-law to the throne three years later, became known as the Kronprinz Palais. Here on January 27., 1859, was born her son and heir, the future Emperor William II. of Germany. The accouchement had given rise to the gravest anxiety and shortly before the Princess's delivery all hope of the birth of a living child had been abandoned. However, both the boy and his mother recovered, but it was not noticed until the third day after his birth, that the heir to the Hohenzollerns had been born with a paralysed left arm.

Few controversies of recent times have been conducted with such bitterness by rival historians and journalists as that concerning the relations of the Emperor William II. and his mother. Of the latter's character some description has already been given, and the following pages will show that the life in Germany of Queen Victoria's eldest daughter was one of profound and lasting sorrow, only relieved by the love and consideration of her husband. Of the Emperor William II. it need only be said here that he is probably the most maligned figure living in Europe to-day.

It was only natural that Princess Frederick should have been deeply disappointed that her eldest son had been born with a paralysed arm, which always remained practically useless. It was equally inevitable that this misfortune, which prevented the young Prince from participating

in most of the enjoyments of youth, should have made him extremely self-conscious and determined at all costs to show the world, when he had the opportunity, that he was not such a useless creature as he appeared. Very probably his mother, whose interests were manifold, may have omitted to show him sufficient sympathy in his affliction, although it is difficult to believe that any mother could be so brutal as actually to laugh at her child for having a paralysed arm, as German writers have asserted, or even that she "cherished in her heart a secret grudge against her misshapen son," which is the opinion of Herr Emil Ludwig.

In her letters to Queen Victoria, Princess Frederick's references to her eldest son were, however, distinctly unsympathetic and, according to her own account, her treatment of Prince William was often violent and unwise. In March 1880, for example, she wrote to her mother saying that "Willy . . . does not care to look at anything, took no interest whatever in works of art, did not in the least admire beautiful scenery and would not look at a guide book." This was a prejudiced and erroneous judgment of a man with wide culture and considerable taste. Six years later she wrote: "William is as blind and green, wrong-headed and violent on politics as can be." A year later she told Queen Victoria that her son was "vain and selfish" and believed "rank retrograde and chauvinistic nonsense." A

most distressing incident happened when Prince William came to San Remo in November, 1887, to visit his father who was dying of cancer. He strongly urged his mother to permit the operation, which was considered vital by all the German surgeons, and to which one English surgeon was opposed. "He (Prince William) was as rude, as disagreeable and as impertinent to me as possible," wrote his mother to Queen Victoria. "I pitched into him with considerable violence." As an earlier operation, which the Prince had desired, might have saved his father's life, it was not unnatural that he should have been on bad terms with his mother.

Differences in temperament, health and circumstances account for most family disagreements, and therefore the conflict between the Emperor William and his mother may be judged on these lines: on the one hand, there was a dogmatical, injudicious and disappointed woman, determined to mould her eldest son according to her own unyielding ideas, a woman who by temperament, was incapable of sympathy with moral or physical imperfection; on the other hand, there was a proud and vain young man afflicted from birth with a paralysed arm who either was, or believed himself to be, despised by his mother both for his lack of mental powers and physical prowess. It would have been almost a miracle if Prince William, on becoming Emperor at the age of twenty-nine, had forgiven

his mother for her real or imagined offences against him, and had settled down to the sober performance of his duties instead of losing his head, as he did, in the glamour of the Imperial Throne. Whatever the faults may have been on both sides, the vital ones were made during Prince William's early life, when inevitably the onus of responsibility must be on the parents' shoulders.

Family affairs were never allowed to monopolize the time of the Crown Princess (as Princess Frederick became in 1861, on the death of King Frederick William IV.), at the expense of her exuberant interest in home and foreign politics. In 1863, when Count Bismarck, who had recently become Chancellor, was so pleasantly engaged in crushing the liberties of the Prussian Press, she strongly supported her husband in his struggle against his father the new King, to obtain modifications in the proposed laws of the Press. Naturally their efforts proved futile and the Crown Princess wrote angrily to her mother: "Thank God, I was born in England, where people are not slaves and too good to allow themselves to be treated as such." In the following year, the war against Denmark broke out and, although she was eager for the success of Prussian arms, it was thought in Berlin that she shared the sympathies of England for Denmark. Once again, she voiced her indignation in a letter to Queen Victoria: "I feel as if I could smash the

idiots," she wrote in May, 1864, "but you see there are and will be narrow-minded donkeys everywhere. . . ." Nevertheless, when in 1866 Prussia triumphed over Austria in the Seven Weeks' War, she wrote proudly to her mother: "I cannot and will not forget that I am a Prussian."

The crisis between France and Germany in 1870, found the Crown Princess badly informed as to the military strength of the two countries concerned. She wrote to the Queen on July 13th. saying that: "the French are determined to pick a quarrel with us (actually Bismarck was determined to pick a quarrel with France) knowing,—as they must—that they are well prepared and we are not. . . ." And again, five days later she wrote: "The odds are fearfully against us in the awful struggle which is about to commence. . . ." In this underestimation, however, of Germany's resources, the Crown Princess was joined by most European powers and in particular, by the French themselves.

The rapid and overwhelming success of the German armies in the Franco-German War naturally filled the Crown Princess with pride and gave her the opportunity, after the surrender of the Emperor Napoleon and his army at Sedan, to write a series of moralizing letters to her mother. "Such a downfall is a melancholy thing, but it is meant to teach deep lessons," she wrote on September 6th., after Sedan and the flight of

the Empress Eugénie to England. "May we all learn what frivolity, conceit, and immorality lead to!" Not content with these pious reflections, the Crown Princess wrote again to the Queen on the following day. "What will Bertie and Alix say to all these marvellous events!", she began one of her ecstatic paragraphs, knowing well enough that the Prince and Princess of Wales were strongly pro-French in their sympathies and much regretted the fall of the Second Empire. She then continued with this satisfying soliloquy: "Gay and charming Paris! *What* mischief that very Court, and still more that very attractive Paris, has done to English society, to the stage, and to literature! *What* harm to the young and brilliant aristocracy of London!" After this tilt at her eldest brother the Prince of Wales, for his love of Paris and amusing society, the Crown Princess drew an irrelevant contrast between the working-classes of France and Germany, but it is improbable that Queen Victoria, despite her ability to moralize, was much impressed by these pharisaical effusions of her eldest daughter.

Although the Crown Princess naturally rejoiced in the victory of Germany, she was not insensible to the plight of the Empress Eugénie with whom she had been on friendly terms, and whose kindness to her on two visits to Paris, in 1855 as a child with her mother, and again with her husband for the Exhibition of 1867, she recollected with gratitude. She therefore decided to pay the

exiled Empress a delicate compliment by sending to her in England a screen looted by the Prussian soldiery from her boudoir at St. Cloud, the palace which had been destroyed in the German advance on Paris. The screen was accordingly forwarded to Queen Victoria with a covering letter, asking her mother to restore it to the Empress. “. . . I consider this (the screen) *not* a trophy of war, and do *not* see what *right* I have to keep it,” she explained to her mother. “Moreover, I would not wish to have anything in my possession which had belonged to the Empress, who has always been *so kind* to me, and on different occasions made me such handsome presents.” The Crown Princess concluded with a further explanation of her conduct: “I do *not* approve of war trophies, at least of *ladies* possessing them.”

This thoughtful action on the part of her daughter placed the Queen in a twofold predicament. Firstly, the Palace of St. Cloud was not the private property of the Emperor Napoleon but belonged to the State, while secondly, to return the screen to the Empress might enable the French Republican Government to prove that the German armies had been guilty of plundering the country. Queen Victoria therefore consulted her Foreign Secretary Lord Granville, who strongly urged her to decline to be the intermediary between the Crown Princess and the Empress Eugénie. Nor did

Lord Granville share the Prussian views about war trophies. "In this country war trophies mean flags and guns," he wrote to the Queen: "the presents taken from palaces and country houses . . . would be called here acts of plunder, or looting." In consequence of this official disapproval, the screen was packed up again and returned to the disappointed Crown Princess. But some time later, when peace had been restored between Germany and France, she was permitted to satisfy her graceful ambition and the much-travelled screen re-crossed the Channel, to ornament the Empress Eugénie's boudoir at Camden Place.

The sixteen years following the close of the Franco-German War were comparatively uneventful for the Crown Princess. Owing to their liberal principles, both she and her husband were rigorously debarred from politics by the jealous and watchful Prince Bismarck, which confined the Crown Prince to his military and literary interests and his wife to her artistic and philanthropic activities. During these years the rift between Prince William and his mother grew ever wider and by 1880, when the Prince was married to Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, known in the family as "Dona," their estrangement was complete.

In 1887, the old Emperor William I. celebrated his ninetieth birthday and the Crown Prince and Princess naturally felt that their rule, which

they were determined should be beneficent and liberal, must soon begin. But in January of the same year, the Crown Prince developed a small growth on his left vocal chord which, after the failure of various palliative measures, the German doctors decided to be of a malignant and possibly cancerous nature. The doctors, therefore, un-animously agreed to bring in Doctor Morell Mackenzie, an eminent expert in laryngology. The English specialist denied the existence of cancer and removed the growth, for which he was knighted, unfortunately prematurely by Queen Victoria, and the Crown Prince although very hoarse, was able to attend the Queen's Jubilee in June, accompanied by the Crown Princess.

The autumn was spent by the patient and his wife at San Remo where, in November, it was discovered that the growth had returned. Sir Morell admitted to the Crown Prince himself that the malady was probably cancer, but declined to accept the urgent advice of the German doctors that tracheotomy should be performed. In February, 1888, owing to the difficulty of breathing, a canula had been inserted in the patient's throat but, further palliatives being now obviously useless, Mackenzie was compelled to agree to an operation. It was successfully performed by a German surgeon, but shortly after, the Crown Prince was completely deprived of the power of speech.

On March 9., 1888, the Emperor William I. died. The new Emperor and Empress received the news at San Remo and the first official act of the former was to invest his wife with the highest Prussian order, the ribbon of the Black Eagle. He then wrote on a piece of paper the following words and handed them to Sir Morell Mackenzie: "I thank you for having made me live long enough to recompense the valiant courage of my wife." It was a pathetic beginning to one of the saddest reigns in history.

The Emperor Frederick ruled for ninety-eight days, during which time Germany was governed by a Sovereign who was dumb and fast dying of cancer. The Emperor bravely attended to State business, as far as he was able, and even possessed sufficient energy to dismiss a reactionary Minister who was a close friend of Prince Bismarck. But the virulence of the disease could not be abated nor its consequences postponed, and on June 15., 1888, to the inexpressible grief of his devoted wife, the Emperor Frederick died.

Few illustrious widows in any age have been so violently attacked, on the death of their husbands, as was the Empress Frederick. The whole German Press accused her of being directly responsible for the Emperor's death by refusing to listen to the advice of German doctors, because they were Germans, and by bringing over from England a quack doctor, just because he was of her own nationality. It is only in recent years

that this vile abuse has been refuted, and here it is sufficient to say that it was the German doctors, and not the Empress Frederick, who sent for Morell Mackenzie and that, throughout the whole of the Emperor's illness, she faithfully and willingly accepted the concerted opinion of all doctors concerned in the case, and that she did all in her power to save her husband's life. That Mackenzie himself proved less correct in his diagnosis and advice than the German doctors and that, by postponing the operation of tracheotomy for three months, the English doctor made a grave error of judgment, were probably accurate charges, but in no sense could the Empress Frederick be held responsible for these mistakes. Although she may have been a tactless and overbearing mother, there is no evidence to prove that she was a pig-headed or callous wife.

The thirteen years which elapsed between the Emperor's death and her own, were spent by the Empress Frederick in the throes of misery, jealousy and neglect, which eventually developed in her mind a persecution mania. That she was heartlessly treated by the new Emperor and Prince Bismarck is clearly shown by an incident immediately following her husband's death. The Neue Palais where he lay, was instantly surrounded by a large number of troops. According to Herr Emil Ludwig: "Divisions of training-battalions approached the Palace at the double.

. . . Hussars appeared at a trot . . . the Palace was, in the military sense, hermetically sealed." Anybody wishing to leave had to obtain the permission of the new Emperor's A.D.C., and telegrams had to bear his visa. Amazed and indignant at this unparalleled treatment, the Empress Frederick appealed to her son to protect her and she begged Prince Bismarck to visit her. Both petitions were ignored, Bismarck replying that, owing to the additional work inevitable at the inception of a new régime, he had no time at his disposal to pay his respects in person to the Dowager Empress.

On realizing that the objects of her son and his Chancellor were to ignore and humiliate her the Empress Frederick decided to retire. So, accompanied by her three daughters and a small retinue, she escaped from the Neue Palais to her farm at Bornstedt. From here she wrote a long letter to her mother, which mingled sorrow with much bitterness of heart: ". . . more cruel suffering was never laid on human soul than on mine at the moment! . . . I see others taking his (the Emperor Frederick) place, knowing they cannot fill it as he did! . . . Theirs is now the power! I disappear with him. . . . We had treasured up much experience! Bitterly, hardly bought!" Queen Victoria was much distressed by her daughter's letter and noted in her Journal: ". . . Had a heart-broken one (letter) from poor dear Vicky, who . . . has

to put up with the most monstrous behaviour from Prince Bismarck and her son. It makes my blood boil!"

Neither the temperature of Queen Victoria's blood nor the bitter complaints of her daughter could alter the policy of the new Emperor William II., supported by his Chancellor, towards the Empress Frederick. He did not require his mother personally or politically, and he took no trouble to conceal from her his complete indifference to her welfare, nor his unyielding resolve that she should play no part in his life or in the politics of his Empire. The Dowager Empress had, therefore, many indignities to suffer of which she could justly complain, but her letters show that, in common with her mother, she suffered from acute "Schadenfreude," while unlike Queen Victoria, she always imagined she was being slighted by people who in fact were entirely disinterested in her life. From the point of view of her son it should be said that for a German Emperor to have a mother who was a professing liberal, was as rare and disturbing in 1890 as it would be for a European Monarch to possess a Communist parent-to-day. The Empress Frederick also possessed a most contradictory character which, in one aspect, inevitably alienated the sympathies of all Germans. "She was always most German in England and most English in Germany," Emperor William II. wrote of his mother in his own Life. It would be

difficult to imagine a more provoking characteristic for any Sovereign to possess.

Although it would be impossible to withhold genuine sympathy from a woman to whom misfortune gave as her husband an Emperor who died at the beginning of his reign, and a son who deserted her after his father's death, it would be tedious to quote extracts from the Empress's letters to Queen Victoria, during her last years, which chiefly manifest self-pity, fierce bitterness and an impotent jealousy of her son and daughter-in-law. It is more pleasant to consider a few incidents of her quiet life abroad and at Cronberg, where she built a house of her own called "Friedrichshof," in order to be independent of the benevolence of her son. Here, after one anniversary of the Battle of Worth, a victory in 1870 over the French at which her husband had distinguished himself, she wrote to her mother: ". . . His dear old horse 'Worth' came to me this morning, it had a laurel wreath on. My tears fell fast over its velvety nose, while it was eating sugar out of my hand!" In 1889, she went to stay with the Queen of Denmark and had the unusual experience of being in a house party where horseplay and practical jokes served to entertain the royal guests. "The noise they all made, and the wild romps they had were simply indescribable," she wrote in amazement to Queen Victoria. "Once or twice I was obliged to laugh right out when they were

all carrying each other." It was a welcome change to her lonely and placid life at Cronberg, although the young Danish royalities must have possessed considerable courage to have romped in the presence of the august widow. Early in the following year, 1890, the Empress Frederick attended the funeral of her mother-in-law the Empress Augusta. Venom, it would appear, distorted her reflections as she gazed on the face of her old enemy in her coffin, since she remarked in a letter to her mother, how the fact that the eyes of the dead Empress were closed, "gave her a gentler expression than I ever saw in life," and she then referred to "her false hair in ringlets on her brow."

Up to 1898, the Empress had enjoyed the most excellent health, but in that year she had a riding accident which injured her back and caused her to become a complete invalid, in almost incessant pain. Nevertheless, her love of politics did not weaken and she took the keenest interest in the Boer War, severely criticizing the Emperor for his foolhardy telegram to President Kruger, and the German Press in general for their lurid stories of English barbarities in South Africa. Towards the close of 1899, the doctors cautiously diagnosed the Empress' complaint as lumbago, although in fact she was now slowly dying of cancer. On New Year's day 1900, she wrote a letter to her mother, typical of both her courage and her mentality. "The first words this morning

and my motto for the century: 'God Save the Queen.' Never was this prayer breathed more tenderly and devotedly, nor from a more grateful heart." In the course of this letter she discussed the Boer War, strongly urging a fight to the finish against the enemy, although she remarked: "Heaven knows each drop of precious British blood seems a drop too much to shed. . . ." At the end she added as an afterthought: "I am able to be up for a little in an armchair and on the sofa."

After the death of her mother on January 22., 1901, the Empress' hold on life perceptibly weakened and her condition was indeed pitiable when her brother came to visit her at Friedrichshof, shortly after he had succeeded to the throne as King Edward VII. A small retinue was brought by the King, which included his Physician-in-Ordinary, Sir Francis Laking, and his Equerry and Private Secretary, Sir Frederick Ponsonby, who was created Lord Sysonby on the occasion of the Jubilee of the late King George V. After the party had been staying three days at Friedrichshof, the Empress received Sir Frederick Ponsonby in a private audience. Although she was clearly in pain, she asked him many searching questions about English politics and concluded by requesting him to take her letters back with him to England. When Sir Frederick had agreed to this charge, the Empress said to him; "I will send them to you at one

o'clock to-night. . . . I don't want a soul to know that they have been taken away and certainly Willie (the Emperor) must not have them, nor must he ever know that you have got them."

Sir Frederick was slightly unsettled at the prospect of playing the rôle of a smuggler, but he did not anticipate any difficulty in packing a few bundles of letters amongst his effects and returning with them to London. But a surprise awaited him. Shortly after one o'clock, while Sir Frederick was working in his bedroom, a quiet tap was heard on the door and, on his calling out "Herein," four men entered carrying two large black boxes, each the size of a portmanteau, which were heavily corded and bore plain white labels with neither name nor address. Having deposited their load, the men who wore blue serge breeches and long riding-boots, withdrew without a word.

Sir Frederick was now placed in a most unexpected dilemma. Concealment of such large boxes was clearly impossible, and he knew that strict injunctions had been issued that nothing might enter Friedrichshof, without the knowledge of the Emperor's Chief of Police. However, Sir Frederick proved equal to the occasion and having written on them respectively "Books with care" and "China with care," placed them in the passage outside his room with his empty portmanteaus. The ruse succeeded and no questions were asked.

A few days later King Edward and his retinue left Friedrichshof to return to London. Sir Frederick was in the hall, talking to the Emperor, when his black boxes passed through on the way to be loaded on the wagon. They looked so distinct from the rest of the luggage that Sir Frederick was convinced that somebody would inquire what they were, but nothing was said and the Emperor went on talking. But outside in the drive, Sir Frederick had cause to be anxious again. Not only were his boxes the last to be loaded on the wagon, but the tarpaulin was too short to cover them and, to Sir Frederick, they looked so dangerously suspicious with their new cords and labels staring down from the wagon on the party in the hall. But fortunately, when at last they were driven away, the Emperor was still talking.

Twenty-five years after their safe arrival in England, the letters of the Empress Frederick were published. Not only by their publication did the letters refute many false charges brought against the Empress in Bismarck's *Reminiscences*, but they have also been of considerable value to the student of nineteenth-century German history.

On August 5., 1901, the Empress Frederick died at Friedrichshof. The first part of the funeral service took place in the little Church at Cronberg, after which her body was taken by train to Potsdam and, by her own direction, buried by the side of her husband whom she had loved so well, and



"MY DARLING SOPHIE LOOKED SO SWEET . . . MY LITTLE LAMB . . ."

*Empress Frederick to Queen Victoria
October 1889*

PRINCESS VICTORIA OF PRUSSIA (LATER OF SCHAUMBERG-LIPPE) AND
PRINCESS SOPHIE OF PRUSSIA (LATER QUEEN SOPHIE OF GREECE). C. 1887

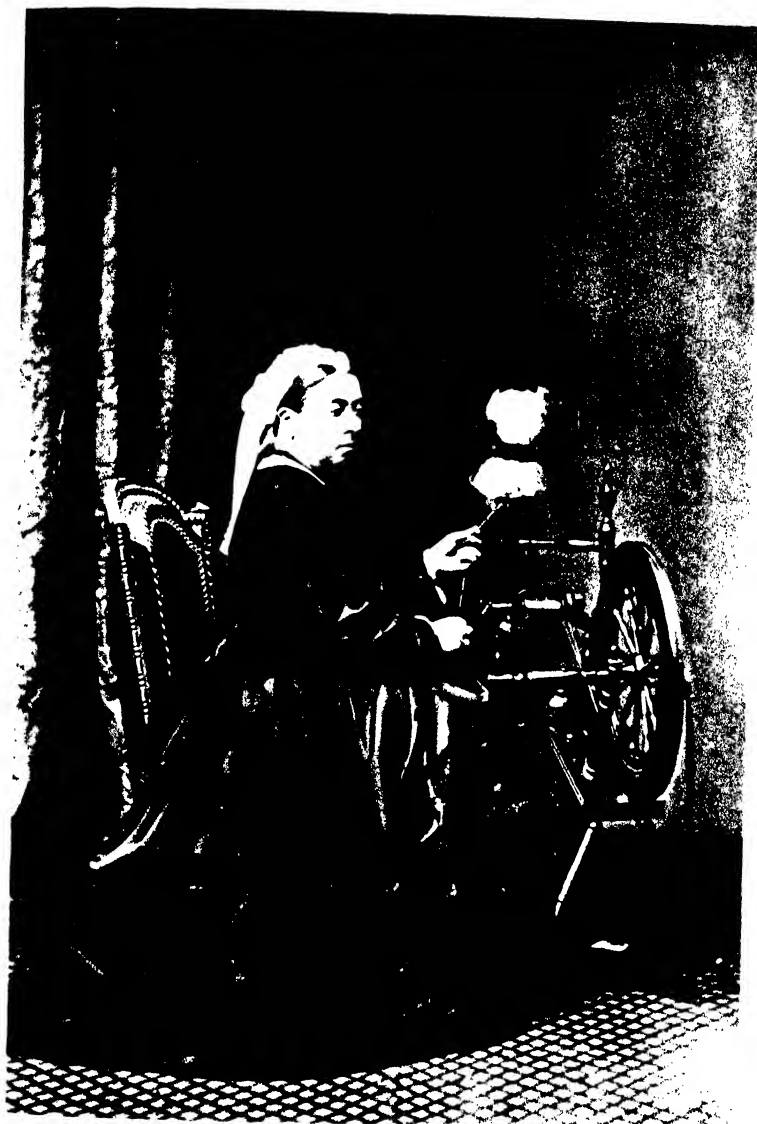
whose tragic death had embittered the last years of her life.

During the forty years she spent in Germany, the Empress Frederick had been nobly and unselfishly supported in all her sorrows and difficulties, by her three younger daughters, the Princesses Victoria, Sophie and Margaret of Prussia. Princess Victoria was born in April, 1866, during the Austro-Prussian War and, in consequence, the Crown Princess (as she then was) wrote to Queen Victoria: "our christening will be such a sad one; the day after, my Fritz leaves and joins his troops. . . ." Four months later she wrote to her mother: "I send you a photo of Miss Victoria—it is not at all favourable—she is such a dear pretty little thing and so lively—she crows and laughs and jumps and begins to sit up and has short petticoats."

"Miss Victoria" was destined early in life to suffer a great matrimonial disappointment. At the age of seventeen she professed of her own accord a strong desire to marry Prince Alexander of Battenberg who had become Prince of Bulgaria in 1879. Her parents favoured the match, but unfortunately Prince Bismarck who delighted in thwarting the designs of the Crown Princess, opposed it strongly, receiving the enthusiastic support of Prince William, in his attitude. In 1886, Prince Alexander was forced to abdicate under Russian pressure, but Princess Victoria still hoped to become his wife, and two years

later the Crown Princess again urged this union for her daughter, although Prince Alexander was in exile and Prince Ferdinand of Coburg had installed himself in Bulgaria. But Prince Bismarck was now even more opposed to the alliance than before, since, while in 1886 the principal purpose of his opposition had been the discomfiture of the Crown Princess, he was now genuinely afraid that official German acquiescence in the marriage of Princess Victoria to Prince Alexander, who still had many adherents in Sofia, might embroil the German with the Russian Empire.

So once again the veto of the Imperial Chancellor destroyed the amorous hopes of Princess Victoria although on this occasion, her grandmother Queen Victoria, angrily intervened on her behalf. After pointing out in a letter that "*Russia cannot care a straw about Prince Alexander's marriage unless they admit the probability, if not the likelihood, of his returning to Bulgaria,*" the Queen turned her attention to the iniquitous conduct of Prince William and Bismarck: "*How Bismarck and still more William can play such a double game it is impossible for us honest, straightforward English to understand. Thank God! We are English!*" But the Queen's rage was impotent against the decision of Prince Bismarck and eventually she was compelled to acquiesce in the relinquishment of the proposed alliance. It was to be feared, however, that the affection entertained by Princess Victoria for



"THANK GOD! WE ARE ENGLISH!"

Queen Victoria to Empress Frederick
1888

QUEEN VICTORIA. C. 1875

Prince Alexander was not returned in equal measure by the Prince, since he showed no eagerness to resume connection with the infatuated Princess after he had lost the Bulgarian Throne and, according to the English Military Attaché in Berlin, he was at that time indulging in a "Zärtliches Verhältniss" (tender liaison) with a member of the histrionic art.

Two years later, in 1890, Princess Victoria wearily accepted an arranged marriage with Prince Adolphus of Schaumburg-Lippe, who lived until 1916. Some years after the conclusion of the Great War, the Princess concluded a second matrimonial alliance. She married a Russian waiter and attempted to find on the back of his motor-bicycle the freedom and excitement which her royal station had previously denied her. She died in 1929.

The life of her younger sister, Princess Sophie, was led on happier and more orthodox lines. The third daughter of the Crown Princess, she was born in June 1870 and was christened, at the end of the following month, in the Neue Palais at Potsdam, during the initial stages of the Franco-German War. "My sweet little Sophie was very good and only cried a little bit," wrote the Crown Princess to her mother ". . . they (her other children) were frightened at the clergyman's voice and energetic gesticulations and Vicky (Princess Victoria) kept sobbing, 'Don't let the man hurt baby.' " At the age of

nineteen, the Princess married the Duke of Sparta, who later became King Constantine of Greece. The wedding took place in Athens and was attended by her mother who wrote a full description of the ceremony to Queen Victoria. "My darling Sophie looked so sweet and grave and calm, my little lamb. . . . Her neck and throat looked so white and pretty, and the wreath fitted so nicely and close round her head. The gown was of white satin with a *tablier* of cloth of silver trimmed with lilies on lace and garlands of orange blossom and myrtle. . . . The only contretemps was the veil having disappeared . . . she had to wear a plain tulle one. . . ."

In 1890, the year following her marriage, the Duchess of Sparta, in order to satisfy public opinion in Greece, announced her intention of joining the Orthodox Church. She was strongly supported by her mother in this decision, but her brother the Emperor William, professed to be horrified by the suggestion and informed her that should she enter the Greek Communion, she would never be permitted to visit Germany again. This fatuous and pompous threat was ignored by the Duchess and naturally the Emperor never attempted to carry it into effect. During the Great War, Queen Sophie (her husband had become King in 1913) was widely calumniated by the Allies for her presumed German sympathies. As the sister of the Emperor of Germany, she could hardly have been blamed for desiring

the victory of the Central Powers but, worthy of her grandmother Queen Victoria, she deplored the world conflict and did all in her power to prevent the country of her adoption being embroiled in the war. The unfair and extravagant attacks made against her in England at that time, served as useful cover for the British Government in its blundering and insolent policy in Greece. Queen Sophie died at Florence in 1932.

The Empress Frederick was very devoted to the Princesses Victoria and Sophie as well as to her youngest daughter Margaret, who married Prince Frederick of Hesse. All three had valiantly supported their mother against their brother William and Prince Bismarck, but to her eldest daughter Charlotte, the Empress was not equally attached. This Princess was married in 1878 to Prince Bernhard of Saxe-Meiningen and after that date, in the opinion of the Empress, had passed into the ranks of her enemies. However that may have been, the occasion of Princess Charlotte's marriage was the cause of another matrimonial alliance of the greatest interest both to the English and Prussian royal families.

Amongst the guests at this marriage in Berlin was the Duke of Connaught, who had come over from England for the ceremony in company with his brother the Prince of Wales. Here he met Princess Louise Margaret, third daughter of Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia, known from the colour of his hair as the "Red Prince," and

the Duke decided he wished to make her his wife. On his return to England, Queen Victoria was informed by her son of this marriage project, but it was not received with enthusiasm. "(Arthur) told me he had taken a great liking to Louise of Prussia," the Queen noted in her Journal on March 2., 1878, "who was brought up by an English governess. . . . He said he did not wish to marry yet . . . and meant, if I had no objection, to ask to see her this summer again. I could not help saying that I disliked the Prussians, and told him he should see others first, but he said it would make no difference." Under these circumstances the Queen gave her consent and the marriage took place in St. George's Chapel on March 13., 1879.

Arthur William Patrick Albert, Duke of Connaught and Strathearn, was the third son of Queen Victoria and was born in 1850. He was the godson of the Duke of Wellington, who died two years later, and who had been greatly flattered by being invited to be godfather to a son of Queen Victoria. Prince Arthur who was brought up under the strict régime then in force in the royal nurseries, received at the age of seventeen the Order of the Garter and in 1870, Mr. Gladstone wrote of him to the Queen that: "the Prince's frank, intelligent and engaging manners adorn the high station which he holds." The Duke was from youth a keen soldier and received his first commission in 1868. Three



"THE PRINCE'S FRANK, INTELLIGENT, AND ENGAGING MANNERS
ADORN THE HIGH STATION WHICH HE HOLDS"

Mr. Gladstone to Queen Victoria
1870

DUKE OF CONNAUGHT. C. 1879

years later he became a Captain in the Rifle Brigade, a regiment with which his name is intimately connected to-day. He was given command of the First Battalion in 1876 and in 1880 he became a Major-General. It was shortly after the Duke had been given this rank that he was present at a review held by his mother in Edinburgh, in pouring rain. Everybody on parade got drenched, and immediately after the review was over the Queen hastened to attend to her bedraggled family. "I went also to see Arthur, who had been quite wet through," she wrote in her Journal on August 25., 1881. "And his nice new general's uniform quite spoilt by the green of the ribbon of the Thistle coming off on his tunic."

The following year, the Duke went to Egypt in command of the First Guards Brigade. His mother was greatly distressed by his departure and wrote on July 20., 1882: "When I read that my darling, precious Arthur was really to go, I quite broke down. . . ." The Duke served with distinction in the Egyptian campaign and was present at the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir. After this victory, Sir Garnet Wolseley wrote to the Queen that the Duke of Connaught had behaved with great courage when under heavy fire. In November, amongst other Generals decorated by the Queen at Windsor, was her son Arthur. After the ceremony, she wrote in her Journal: ". . . on all . . . I pinned the medal, but, I fear, pricked one."

In 1886, the Duke was given the command at Bombay and four years later it was suggested that he should be made Adjutant-General to the forces, as a stepping-stone to the position of Commander-in-Chief, which it was devoutly hoped would soon be vacated by the aged and obstinate Duke of Cambridge. After his long and varied service, no officer could have been better equipped for the post than the Duke of Connaught, but Lord Salisbury's Cabinet declined to sanction the appointment, as the Government wished on the Duke of Cambridge's resignation to acquire a firmer control of the army, which they knew would be difficult if another Royal Duke became Commander-in-Chief. Queen Victoria was most indignant with the Cabinet at this decision and wrote to Lord Salisbury: ". . . she cannot and will not submit to the *shameful principle* that Princes are to suffer for *their birth* in a monarchical country. Have a republic at once if that is the principle."

In 1890, the Duke of Connaught was given the Aldershot Command and in the following year the opportunity arose for him to become Commander-in-Chief in India. But according to the Queen: "He would like it very much but the great difficulty is the children." In 1895, the Duke of Cambridge at last retired, and once more the Queen urged the claims of her son to become Commander-in-Chief. But the Cabinet considered that such an appointment would be



"LOUISE OF PRUSSIA, WHO WAS BROUGHT UP BY AN ENGLISH
GOVERNESS . . ."

Queen Victoria in her Journal
1878

DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT WITH PRINCE ARTHUR, PRINCESS MARGARET
(LATER CROWN PRINCESS OF SWEDEN). AND PRINCESS PATRICIA (LADY
PATRICIA RAMSAY, C. 1888

“inexpedient,” and the Queen vented her spleen on the successful candidate. “I dislike the appointment of Lord Wolseley as C.-in-C.,” she wrote to Lord Salisbury, “as he is very imprudent, full of new fancies, and has a clique of his own.” The Duke of Connaught was consoled for this disappointment by many commands of first-class importance during the following years, receiving his last military appointment in 1917, that of Inspector General of Overseas Troops.

The Duke’s family consisted of one son Prince Arthur of Connaught, and of two daughters the late Crown Princess of Sweden and Princess Patricia who married, in 1919, the Hon. Alexander Ramsay. The London residence of the Duke of Connaught is Clarence House, St. James’s, and his country house is Bagshot Park, Surrey. He is a member of the Army and Navy, Marlborough and Travellers’ Clubs. The Duke of Connaught was eighty-six on May 1., 1936.

The Duchess of Connaught was ten years younger than her husband, being born in 1860 at the Marmorpalais in Potsdam. Here she was brought up in the greatest simplicity and, on her marriage, expressed amazement at the comparative luxury of the English Court. The Duchess, who was noted for her kindness and sincerity, died in 1917; a time which was full of suffering for those who had lived in and loved both England and Germany.

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER SIX

“He will have to go through a hard school if he is not to perish.”

THE PRINCE CONSORT ON THE
DUKE OF EDINBURGH IN 1861

LEOPOLD GEORGE DUNCAN ALBERT, Duke of Albany, who was born in 1853, was Queen Victoria's fourth and youngest son. He was probably the most handsome and certainly the most delicate of her male children. In character he was affectionate and dependent, and his mother mentioned with approbation his conduct during the serious illness of the Prince of Wales in 1871. “He behaves so well,” she wrote in her Journal on December 8th., “and shows so much feeling.” The following year, he matriculated at Oxford University.

Constant minor ailments had clouded the Prince's youth, and when he was twenty-two he had a severe attack of typhoid fever, which was followed by haemorrhage of the bowels, although by August of that year, 1875, he had recovered sufficiently to join his mother, who was at

Osborne for her summer holiday. Here he witnessed an alarming accident when yachting on the *Alberta* with the Queen and his sister Princess Beatrice. Owing to lack of judgment on the part of another yacht, called the *Mistletoe*, she collided with the *Alberta* in Cowes Roads. The Queen described the incident in her Journal and recorded how, just before the accident, Princess Beatrice said: "very calmly, 'Mama there is a yacht coming against us.' " Those on board the *Alberta* escaped without injury, but two people were drowned from the *Mistletoe*.

Owing to ill-health, the Prince spent most of his time at his country house, Boyton Manor in Wiltshire, and when in London lived at Buckingham Palace. In 1877, owing to temporary improvement in his health, he was able to take the post of Private Secretary to the Queen. In 1881, he represented his mother at the funeral of Lord Beaconsfield who had died on April 19th. A week later the Queen went to Hughenden herself, in order to pay a last tribute to her beloved statesman. His grave had been purposely left open and, greatly moved, she placed a wreath of china flowers on his coffin.

Three years later the Queen received a telegram from Prince Leopold asking for her consent to his marriage with Princess Helen of Waldeck-Pyrmont who was a member of a small princely house with territory controlled by Prussia, lying between Westphalia and Hanover. The Queen



"HE WAS SUCH A CHARMING COMPANION, SO ENTIRELY THE 'CHILD
OF THE HOUSE' "

Queen Victoria in her Journal
March 1884

PRINCE LEOPOLD (LATER DUKE OF ALBANY). C. 1874

was at Balmoral at the time and she wrote in her Journal on November 18., 1881: "This was hardly a surprise to me. . . . But the news rather upset me . . . but as Hélène Waldeck is said to be so good and nice, it may be a blessing to us all." To celebrate his engagement, Queen Victoria created her son Duke of Albany, and his marriage took place at St. George's Chapel on April 27., 1882.

In March the following year, the Duke had to undertake the melancholy duty of breaking the news to his mother of the death of her darling gillie, John Brown. About this time, the Duke of Albany was most anxious to succeed his brother-in-law the Marquis of Lorne as Governor-General of Canada but owing to his weak state of health, the Queen did not urge his appointment on the Government and Lord Lansdowne was nominated to succeed Lord Lorne. In 1884, to the great grief of his mother and family, by all of whom he was greatly loved, the Duke of Albany died from the results of haemophilia. This tendency to bleeding, either spontaneously or from very slight injuries, has been the cause of death with several members of our Royal Family. It is said that this disease, thought to have been introduced into the House of Hanover by Queen Victoria's mother the Duchess of Kent, can only be contracted by men and passed on by women. The Duke of Albany was carried to his grave in St. George's Chapel by men of the

Seaforth Highlanders according to his own directions, although the Queen would have preferred him to have been buried by the side of the Prince Consort, in the Frogmore Mausoleum. After the Duke's death, his mother wrote in her Journal: "He was such a charming companion, so entirely the 'Child of the House.'"

The Duke and Duchess of Albany had two children; Princess Alice Mary Victoria Augusta Pauline, who was born in February 1883 and Prince Leopold Charles Edward George Albert, born in November 1884, eight months after his father's death. In 1904, Princess Alice married Prince Alexander of Teck, created in 1917 Earl of Athlone, and who is the youngest brother of Queen Mary. Prince Leopold succeeded on his birth to the Dukedom of Albany and, in 1900, he became Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in succession to his uncle who, previous to his succession, had been the Duke of Edinburgh. In 1919, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha was deprived of his English title of Duke of Albany for the part he had played against England in the Great War. As he was the ruler of a German Duchy, forming part of the German Empire, it would have been difficult to have suggested an alternative.

The Duchess of Albany who was a sister of Queen Emma of the Netherlands died in 1922. During the years 1914 to 1918 she was the victim of those pitiable divisions of allegiance and sympathy, which were the fate of so many English



"... HÉLÈNE WALDECK IS SAID TO BE SO GOOD AND NICE ..."

Queen Victoria in her Journal
November 1881

DUCHESS OF ALBANY IN HER WEDDING DRESS IN 1882

and German royalties during the Great War. By birth a German and by marriage a British Princess, her only son was fighting for Germany and her son-in-law was a General in the English Army.

The young Duke of Albany's uncle, to whom he succeeded in 1900 as Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, was Prince Alfred Ernest Albert, Duke of Edinburgh, and Queen Victoria's second son. Born in August 1884, Prince Alfred at the age of six, became unconsciously involved in the intrigues of international politics. In 1850, Prussia, alarmed by the revived power of the Austrian Empire after the Hungarian rebellion two years previously, proposed an alliance to both England and France and, in order to secure the adherence of the former Power, suggested to the British Government that a small kingdom might be carved out of Thuringia for Prince Alfred. It was a clumsy and impractical *ballon d'essai* and it was quickly crushed by the Prince Consort. "The idea of such an alliance," he wrote to his uncle the King of the Belgians, "and a Thuringian state for a child of six is in itself too absurd to be entertained."

Prince Alfred was educated at both Bonn and Edinburgh universities, although at the age of fourteen he entered the Royal Navy. But it would not appear that this system of education had provided the satisfactory results which his father had anticipated, since shortly before his

death, the Prince Consort wrote of Prince Alfred: "He will have to go through a hard school if he is not to perish." No doubt the Prince Consort, who died in 1861, did his best during the short time at his disposal, to provide the necessary "hard school," and certainly he would have been proud of his son's later career.

Two years after his father's death, Prince Alfred received a most remarkable but wholly unmerited tribute from the people of Greece. In October, 1862, the Wittelsbach King Otho had been deposed by a Provisional and Revolutionary Government which then proceeded to hold a plebiscite, based on universal suffrage, to decide on the person of the new King of the Hellenes. Prince Alfred's consent to have his name put forward for this position had never been obtained, nor indeed had he even been approached in the matter. But the Greek Government apparently took it for granted that any Prince, in his senses, would be enchanted to become King of the Hellenes since, besides Prince Alfred there were ten other candidates, none of whom, with the possible exception of a Greek nobleman, had expressed the wish to have his name placed on the voting lists. Of the eleven "candidates" some were extremely nebulous such as "An Orthodox King," while others were frankly ridiculous, like the Emperor of Russia and the Prince Imperial of France who, at that date, was only six years old.



WEDDING BOUQUET OF DUCHESS OF ALBANY IN 1882

The result of the plebiscite which was held in December, 1862, showed the determination of the Greek people to have an English King. Prince Alfred polled nearly a quarter of a million votes while his runner-up the Duke of Leuchtenberg, Eugène Beauharnais' grandson, only secured two thousand four hundred. Ninety-three electors proved in favour of a republic, while Prince William of Denmark, the brother of the Princess of Wales, only polled six votes. With that engaging fickleness which has always characterized the Greek nation, Prince William, in the following year, was unanimously chosen King of Greece.

But the Greeks discovered, after the plebiscite of 1862, that it was easier to elect an English Prince as their King than to induce him to accept the throne. Prince Alfred's views on this unexpected honour are unknown, but Queen Victoria at once announced that it was out of the question for her son to become King of the Hellenes. The first and most important reason for this decision was the Convention of 1832, under which no member of the English, Russian or French Royal Families could accept the Throne of Greece, while the fact that Prince Alfred, after the Prince of Wales, was the heir to the English Crown, made it impossible for him to become the king of a foreign country. The refusal of the Greek throne was probably a disappointment to Prince Alfred, since few boys of eighteen would be unwilling to become a king,

but Queen Victoria from personal, as distinct from political, considerations had no desire that her son should become the sovereign of the Greeks who, in her opinion, were a "very touchy and fanciful people."

In 1863, Prince Alfred became a lieutenant in the navy and, while on duty at Malta that year, he became seriously ill with typhoid fever. His mother was naturally greatly worried and, as the Prince Consort had died from the same complaint, her emotions became somewhat involved. This was shown in a letter to her uncle the King of the Belgians, on February 24., 1863: ". . . I cannot imagine how anyone *can* recover from this dire fever if *he didn't*, and if dear Affie . . . should recover, I think my *own* darling must return too!"

In 1866, Prince Alfred was promoted Captain and, while in command of H.M.S. *Galatea*, which visited Australia two years later, he was shot in the back by a Fenian. The wound was serious, but it did not prevent the Prince from making a successful tour through India during the following year, 1869, as the guest of the Viceroy, Lord Mayo and of many of the Indian Princes. He remained in command of the *Galatea* until 1872 and two years later, he was married to the Grand Duchess Marie Alexandrovna, the only daughter of the Emperor Alexander II. of Russia.

The marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh—the



"HE IS FAR LIGHTER IN HAND THAN THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH"

*Mr. Gladstone's reference to the Prince of Wales in his Diary
Sept. 1871*

PRINCE OF WALES (LATER KING EDWARD VII) AND PRINCE ALFRED (LATER
DUKE OF EDINBURGH). C. 1870

title Prince Alfred was given on his engagement—took place in St. Petersburg on January 23., 1874, and was attended, amongst others, by the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Crown Prince and Princess of Germany and the Duke of Connaught. All the guests attended the two marriage ceremonies, the first, according to the rites of the Orthodox Church, which took place in the Winter Palace and the second, according to the Anglican marriage service, which was celebrated by Dean Stanley. The varied and sumptuous entertainments, which followed the wedding, included a state visit to Moscow and an elaborate hunt near St. Petersburg, during which eighty wild boars were killed.

The Duke of Edinburgh had one son, Albert Alexander, Earl of Ulster, who was born in 1874 and died in 1899. There were four daughters of the Duke's marriage, Princess Marie who married King Ferdinand of Roumania, Princess Victoria who became the Grand Duchess Cyril of Russia, Princess Alexandra who married Prince Maximilian Hohenlohe-Langenburg, and Princess Beatrice who became the wife of the Infante Alfonso of Spain.

The Duchess of Edinburgh, according to her mother, the Empress Marie of Russia, must have been far from happy in her adopted country, although the opinions of the Empress on England were vitiated by her deep hatred of both Queen Victoria and the country over which she ruled.

In 1874, the Empress reported to her brother Prince Alexander of Hesse that "Marie (the Duchess of Edinburgh) thinks London hideous, the air there appalling, the English food abominable, the late hours very trying, the visits to Windsor and Osborne boring beyond belief. . . ." Indeed according to the Empress, her daughter "hated the English as soon as she got on the steamer," to take her across the Channel to her new home.

If such were the true sentiments of the Duchess of Edinburgh, she had no one to blame for consenting to become the wife of an English Prince, since after Queen Victoria, who favoured it for political reasons, nobody was keener on her marriage with the Duke of Edinburgh, than herself. In fact her father and mother both opposed the matrimonial alliance of their only daughter with a member of a family they despised, and it seemed probable that the Grand Duchess Marie only urged her parents to allow her to marry the Duke whom she had never even seen, in order to avoid being betrothed to an obscure German prince who had asked for her hand, and was a far less good match than the second son of Queen Victoria. Her married life, it was rumoured, was not uniformly happy, and it was a source of constant irritation to the Duchess that, as a Romanov and the only daughter of the Tsar, she was compelled to give precedence to the Princess of Wales. One of the few consola-

tions of the Duchess of Edinburgh in England was reporting to her mother trivial gossip about people at Court, and certainly she appears to have been observant. In 1874, to the malicious joy of the Empress Marie, she was able to write to her brother: "Marie has discovered that the Queen drinks whisky, sometimes with water but generally without."

In 1876, the Duke of Edinburgh was transferred to H.M.S. *Sultan* and, while in command of that battleship, he received an astonishing letter from his mother, informing him that his cousin King Leopold II. of the Belgians, wished him to become the ruler of Constantinople. The disposal of that throne was certainly not in the gift of the Belgian King, but at that time, owing to the unwelcome possibility that Russia might become master at the Sublime Porte, it was being widely suggested that Constantinople should be placed under the sovereignty of a European prince. His eldest sister, the Crown Princess of Prussia, also thought that her brother Alfred would be an admirable ruler at Istambul. But the Duke of Edinburgh did not share the extravagant views of his sister and cousin and wrote apprehensively to his mother: ". . . I assure you that you frightened me with Leopold of Belgium's proposal. . . . I am sure I would sooner end the remainder of my days in China, to such a fearful prospect." The unlikely danger of becoming "King" of Constantinople for-

tunately passed with the Treaty of Berlin but, before that treaty was signed, the Duke, by a thoughtless indiscretion, incurred the grave displeasure of the Queen.

On February 28., 1878, the war between Russia and Turkey had been terminated by an armistice, with the Tsar's armies at the gates of Constantinople and the fleet of England, who had been on the point of declaring war against Russia, lying in the Golden Horn. This was the moment chosen by the Duke of Edinburgh to invite to his ship Prince Alexander of Battenberg who was attached to the Russian army, on the pretext that his brother, Prince Louis, was serving under the Duke in the *Sultan*. Prince Alexander accepted the invitation and the Duke showed him over his own battleship, as well as the flagship *Alexandra*, and even the newest iron-clad in the fleet, the *Temeraire*, where Prince Alexander was allowed to inspect the mechanism of the newly invented torpedo.

When the news of this tour of inspection reached England, Queen Victoria was furious. The Duke's behaviour she described as "anti-national" and she ordered him to be relieved of his command, as long as the *Sultan* lay off Constantinople. She then commanded that Prince Louis of Battenberg, the innocent victim of his captain's indiscretion, should be sent home and transferred to another ship. Poor Prince Alexander was horrified by the trouble he had brought

upon his brother Louis and the Duke of Edinburgh by visiting the English fleet, and he wrote for sympathy to his aunt the Empress Marie of Russia who, as has been observed, was very anti-British and detested Queen Victoria. In the course of correspondence regarding the incident the Empress Marie, who often expressed herself with a freedom savouring more of the Regency than of the mid-Victorian period, referred to the Queen as a "silly old fool," and said that her language was "worthy of a fish-wife" and her conduct that of a "crazy old hag." But fortunately after a few months Queen Victoria's anger passed and, eight years later, the Duke of Edinburgh's imprudence off Constantinople had been so entirely forgotten that in 1886, he was rewarded for his excellent service by the Commandership-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet.

In 1893, the Duke of Edinburgh, who had been deprived of the chimerical Thrones of Thuringia and Constantinople and of the more substantial Crown of Greece, became Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha. The succession to that dukedom was involved, and since it was held in turn by Queen Victoria's brother-in-law, her second son, and later by a grandson, it may be better for the sake of clarity, briefly to explain it here. Duke Ernest II. of Saxe-Coburg, the Prince Consort's elder brother, having no son, the Prince of Wales on his father's death became the heir to the Duchy. But in 1863, the Prince renounced his

heirship and his place was therefore taken by the Prince Consort's second son, the Duke of Edinburgh. As the latter died in 1900, predeceased by one year by his only son, the rightful heir to Saxe-Coburg became the Duke of Connaught.

The jealousy and suspicions of the Emperor William II. were instantly aroused by the prospect of his uncle becoming a reigning duke in Germany, although it is probable that the idea of becoming the ruler of a German Principality in the Empire of his erratic nephew, was somewhat unpalatable to the Duke of Connaught. In any case, the Emperor, with his usual precipitancy, threatened to induce the Reichstag to veto his uncle's succession, should he attempt to claim the Dukedom. Some compromise was obviously essential and the Duke of Connaught therefore agreed to renounce his rights to Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in favour of his nephew the young Duke of Albany, the posthumous child of the Prince Consort's youngest son. "Little Charlie" as the Queen called him, therefore became Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1900 and the wisdom of this arrangement, as far as the Duke of Connaught was concerned, became obvious fourteen years later, when England and Germany went to war.

To return to the Duke of Edinburgh who, in 1893, became Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha; the Queen was greatly stirred by her son's succession

and wrote in her Journal in August of that year: "I thought of the happy past, so long ago . . . of dear Coburg, and that my child, our son, was now the reigning duke, a foreign sovereign!!" The following year the Queen paid her son a visit in his new Dukedom of Coburg, where she had gone for the first time as a young bride, over fifty years before. But hardly had the Duke succeeded when his health began to fail and he was shortly afflicted by a disease, according to Sir Sidney Lee in his *Life of King Edward VII*, "incurable and painful, whose progress was commonly slow." In consequence it was, perhaps, a release for the Duke when, in 1900, he died suddenly from paralysis of the heart. The Queen was naturally deeply distressed by her son's unexpected death and she wrote in her Journal on July 31st., the day after he died: "Oh God! My poor darling Affie gone too! My third grown up child! It is hard at eighty-one!" The Duchess survived her husband by twenty years.

Apart from his official life as a naval officer and later as the ruler of a German Dukedom, in both of which capacities he proved both conscientious and capable, the Duke of Edinburgh was chiefly notable for his wide knowledge of music, an art in which the descendants of Queen Victoria have rarely excelled. His keen interest in musical education led him to accept the presidency of the Royal Choral Society, an office which he held for many years. The Duke was also

an enthusiastic violinist although, in company with Joseph Joachim, whose sense of perfect pitch was advanced as an excuse, his contemporaries asserted that he usually played out of tune. In character the Duke of Edinburgh considerably resembled his elder brother, although the Duke was of a more dour and solemn disposition than the Prince of Wales. In susceptibility of heart they were also alleged to have much in common.

Although the Prince of Wales did not share with his brother Alfred an appreciation of music, he was fully alive to contemporary taste in the arts, notwithstanding his personal lack of interest in them. He was, for instance, well aware of the popular esteem in which the painter Frederick Leighton was held and wrote to the Queen in 1879, urging her "to intimate a strong desire that Mr. Leighton should be chosen as President of the Royal Academy in succession to Sir Francis Grant." The Prince then pressed Leighton's claims on his mother with the best of arguments: "Dear Papa had the highest opinion of him when he was a young man . . . Mr. Leighton is besides a man of great culture. He is devoted to music, and speaks French, German and Italian like he does English." The latter accomplishments would not appear to afford very strong grounds for Mr. Leighton's title to academic promotion, but the Queen took her son's advice, and the painter of *Flaming June* became the President of the Royal Academy.

To dignify him on his accession to the presidency, Mr. Leighton was knighted by the Queen and eight years later he was created a baronet. Nevertheless, the Prince of Wales was dissatisfied with these honours for his protégé and urged his mother to make Sir Frederick a peer. The Queen, however, jibbed at making an artist one of her hereditary legislators, despite the fact that as early as 1855, she had bought at the Academy, on the advice of the Prince Consort, his *Cimabue's Madonna carried in procession through the streets of Florence*, and as late as 1890, she was alleged to have admired Sir Frederick's portrait of Psyche in her bath. It was not until the New Year's Honours list of 1896 that the Queen consented to elevate this tedious and conscientious artist to the peerage and three weeks later, as if overwhelmed by the honour, Lord Leighton died.

But the Prince of Wales' influence over his mother was not always so potent as it had been in the case of appointing Leighton to the presidency of the Royal Academy. In company with her Government and subjects, the Prince deplored the Queen's hatred of publicity which caused her to shun London and Windsor and immure herself in the comparatively inaccessible retreats of Osborne and Balmoral. But the Prince was powerless to effect a change in his mother's contumacious behaviour in this respect which, at times of political crisis, was most unfair on both the

members of the old and new Governments. When in January, 1886, Lord Salisbury resigned and the Queen was most reluctantly compelled to request Mr. Gladstone to form a new Ministry, her refusal to leave Osborne, in order to facilitate its formation, seemed rather vindictive and clearly unreasonable and greatly distressed the Prince of Wales. "I hope you will be able to induce the Queen to come up soon to Windsor," he telegraphed to Sir Henry Ponsonby, her private secretary. "The inconvenience to ingoing and outgoing Ministers while she is at Osborne is obvious . . . most unfavourable criticisms are made on the subject. A.E." Sir Henry could only reply: "I suggested H.M. going up, but was told by Jenner (the doctor) I had made H.M. quite ill with such a proposal. . . ."

Although the Queen declined to leave Osborne to help Mr. Gladstone, the Prince of Wales, to whom Cabinet-making in the abstract was an enjoyable mental exercise, decided to remain in England and to abandon his project of visiting the south of France. In a letter to Sir Henry Ponsonby, informing him of this resolve, the Prince showed an almost pathetic desire to dissipate the illusion that he only lived for pleasure. "My going to Cannes on this occasion is really not for amusement," he wrote to Sir Henry and then explained that the Bishop of Gibraltar had been waiting there some weeks for him to arrive, in order to lay the foundation stone of a Protestant church in memory

of his deceased brother, the Duke of Albany. But although the Prince did not go to Cannes, Queen Victoria, despite every effort made to persuade her, refused to go to Windsor.

The following year 1887, the Queen was more pleasantly engaged than in hiding from Mr. Gladstone's importunities on the Isle of Wight, for on June 20th. she had been Queen of England for fifty years. On that day, her Jubilee was celebrated in London by a thanksgiving service in Westminster Abbey and, for the ceremony, she wore, according to her own account, "a dress and bonnet trimmed with white point d'Alençon, diamond ornaments in my bonnet, and pearls round my neck, with all my orders." In the procession from Buckingham Palace to the Abbey, the Queen was preceded by a body of thirty Princes, led by the Prince of Wales, all of whom were either her descendants, relations or connections by marriage into her family. The four Kings of Saxony, Belgium, Greece and Denmark were also present, as well as the heirs apparent of Germany, Austria, Portugal, Greece, and Sweden. It was a brilliant scene and Queen Victoria was enthusiastically received all along the route. Her popularity was now universal, republicanism was long dead and the English people, stimulated by the new Imperial sentiment, regarded the Sovereign, not only as a wise and venerable ruler, but also as the symbol of the unity of the British Empire.

The following day, the Queen confided her views on the ceremony to her Journal. She began in a somewhat irrelevant manner: "... did not see Mr. Gladstone though he was there." She then became most apposite. "I sat alone (oh! without my beloved husband, for whom it would have been such a proud day!) . . . The *Te Deum*, by my darling Albert, sounded beautiful. . . ." When the service was over all her descendants approached her and kissed her hand, to be kissed in return on the cheek by the Queen. "It was a very moving moment," she related, "and tears were in some of their eyes." The Queen had left Buckingham Palace for the Abbey at half-past eleven and, without recording fatigue, she wrote in her Journal: "We only got back at a quarter to three. Went at once to my room to take off my bonnet and put on my cap."

A few months after the Jubilee celebrations, the Prince of Wales paid a visit to Balmoral, with the object of unveiling there a statue of his mother. An interesting light is thrown on their relations together during the previous twenty-five years, in fact, since the Prince had become a man, by an entry in the Queen's Journal on the day of her son's arrival. "He had not stayed alone with me," she wrote, "excepting for a couple of days in May '68, since he married!" The pathetic tone of this complaint would have deeply distressed the Prince of Wales.

Naturally the Queen, who was now sixty-

eight, had not felt inclined to participate in all the celebrations of Jubilee year although, despite frequent protestations to the contrary, she enjoyed the most robust health. In her youth, it had been the fashion for ladies to be delicate and, in consequence, delicate the Queen remained all her life. Her place was, therefore, sometimes taken by the Princess of Wales who, for example, represented her mother-in-law at a "drawing-room" on May 10., 1887, when the latter had withdrawn after an hour on the throne. On this occasion, a new precedent was made, since the Queen wrote in her Journal: "Lady Blandford came by, I having allowed poor divorced ladies, who have had to divorce their husbands owing to cruelty, desertion, and misbehaviour, but are in no way to blame themselves, to appear at Court." Two years later, while the Queen was on the throne at a "drawing-room," her guests witnessed a most alarming occurrence. "I had a dreadful misadventure," she wrote: "Tirard (her hair-dresser) had not pinned my cap and veil sufficiently firmly, and when, as I felt the room warm, I asked Louisa Buccleuch to remove the lace scarf on my shoulders . . . off came the whole thing completely! The ladies rushed to put it on again, but badly of course . . . it was dreadful, though most ludicrous." The Queen was glad to withdraw, no doubt to discuss the incident with Monsieur Tirard, and the Princess of Wales took her place on the throne.

Besides deputizing for her mother-in-law, the Princess of Wales celebrated a more personal event the year following the Jubilee. This was her Silver Wedding. "Already twenty-five years since Bertie married sweet Alix!", the Queen wrote in her Journal. "To me it was not permitted to celebrate this happy anniversary with my husband Albert." The Prince of Wales had intended to commemorate the occasion with a variety of festivities, but owing to the death of the Emperor Frederick, on June 15., 1888, the entertaining was confined to a family dinner party at Marlborough House, when King Leopold II. of the Belgians proposed the health of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

The death of the Emperor Frederick was, however, to affect the Prince more seriously than by marring his silver wedding, since it was shortly followed by an acrimonious dispute between him and his nephew William, the new Emperor of Germany. That the Prince was guilty of an indiscretion, the initial cause of the trouble, was probably true, but the Emperor weakened an excellent case by dragging in a personal note, which greatly exasperated Queen Victoria.

While in Berlin for the Emperor Frederick's funeral, the Prince of Wales had asked Count Herbert Bismarck, the Foreign Minister and the Chancellor's son, whether he was correct in believing that if the late Emperor had had the opportunity he would have restored Alsace-



"... THAT CRAZY FASHION, THE 'ALEXANDRA LIMP' "
PRINCESS OF WALES (LATER QUEEN ALEXANDRA) IN 1883

Lorraine to France, Schleswig to Denmark, and his private property to the dispossessed Duke of Cumberland. Count Bismarck could not resist the temptation of improving on the Prince's imprudent and entirely hypothetical questions, and he reported to the new Emperor that his uncle had intimated that he ought to put into effect his father's altruistic intentions. Naturally the Emperor William was furious with the Prince of Wales for making such impertinent and interfering suggestions and determined, when he should have a chance, to take his revenge.

Meanwhile, instantly after his succession to the throne, Emperor William invited himself to the Courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg. Queen Victoria was scandalized by this disregard for mourning and wrote to her grandson a strong letter of protest. The Emperor, perhaps not unnaturally, resented his grandmother's reproving and meddlesome behaviour and he replied petulantly that she must no longer treat him as a boy, nor must his uncle "Bertie" regard him simply as a nephew. "We Emperors must stand together," he added pompously. This effusion so maddened the Queen that, in a letter to Lord Salisbury, she said that her grandson's contentions were "really too vulgar and too absurd, as well as untrue, almost *to be* believed. . . . He has been treated just as we should have treated his beloved father and even grandfather, and as the Queen was always treated by her dear uncle

King Leopold. . . . The Queen will not swallow this affront." In concluding this letter, she referred to the Emperor William as a "hot-headed, conceited, and wrong-headed young man, devoid of all feeling."

But while the Queen and the Prince of Wales were fulminating over his conceit and pomposity, the German Emperor made his first reply to the Prince's indiscreet conversation with Count Herbert Bismarck. When unveiling, in August 1888, a monument to a Prussian Prince who had been a prominent Commander in the Franco-German War, he concluded a militant speech with a veiled reprimand of his uncle with the words: "There are people who have the audacity to maintain that my father was willing to part with what he . . . gained on the battlefield. We, who knew him so well, cannot quietly tolerate . . . such an insult to his memory." But this gentle rebuke did not satisfy the Emperor whose wounded pride demanded a personal revenge. The opportunity for this was unexpectedly provided for him a few weeks later. The Prince of Wales had arranged to meet the Emperor of Austria during September and, hearing that his nephew would be in Vienna about the same time, he tactfully wrote to him, expressing pleasure at the prospect of meeting him there and he innocently inquired the date of his arrival. The German Emperor sent no reply to this polite letter.

On September 10., 1888, the Prince of Wales arrived in Vienna to be informed by the much embarrassed Emperor of Austria that the Emperor William had insisted that no other royal personage should be present in the Austrian capital during his visit. The Emperor Francis Joseph did not dare to offend his powerful colleague and in consequence, just before his nephew's arrival, the Prince of Wales was compelled to leave Vienna and to take refuge with the King of Roumania at Sinaia in the Carpathians, although, as soon as the German Emperor had left, the Prince returned to Austria. The whole episode was a great triumph for the Emperor William and a bitter mortification for the Prince of Wales, who had been made to pay dearly for his injudicious remarks to Court Bismarck. Naturally the Prince was unable to believe his nephew's subsequent explanation that his reason for not wishing to meet his uncle in Vienna was to avoid offending the Emperor of Russia. Although at that period, England and Russia were on chronic bad terms with each other, the Prince of Wales fully realized that the only motive for the Emperor William's conduct was that, in the Prince's own words, his nephew preferred "my room to my company."

While his uncle was still smarting under this insult, the Emperor proposed to his grandmother that he should pay a visit to Cowes in August of the following year, 1889. For political

reasons it was impossible for Queen Victoria to refuse his request, and she begged her son to make up the quarrel with his nephew. The Prince, the most amiable and forgiving of men, willingly agreed, provided he could receive a word of apology for what had happened in Vienna. But the Emperor William, realizing the strength of his position, lightly denied that his uncle had cause for complaint and vaguely suggested that the officials of the Austrian Court had taken too seriously an obscure expression of his desires.

A deadlock in this formidable dispute had now obviously been reached and the Queen, under pressure from Lord Salisbury, most reluctantly decided that the feelings of her son would have to be sacrificed to the urgent necessity of maintaining good relations with the new Emperor of Germany. In consequence she was compelled to write to her grandson a letter which, considering the provocation, showed how meek the Queen could be when political considerations were at stake. Entirely ignoring the Emperor's insolent behaviour towards her son, she diffidently suggested that the former should in future treat his uncle with a little more regard and she concluded by expressing great pleasure at the prospect of welcoming him at Cowes. Emperor William replied evasively that he was glad that his grandmother considered the "Vienna affair" as finished and he added with condescension:

"I shall be happy to meet Uncle Bertie at Osborne."

The triumph of the Emperor William over the Prince of Wales was now complete. He had rebuked his uncle in a speech for his incautious remarks to Count Bismarck, he had insulted him by refusing to meet him in Vienna and he had declined to offer the smallest apology for his conduct. Nevertheless, Queen Victoria was ready to receive him at Osborne House for Cowes Regatta and, some weeks before that event, he heard from Sir Edward Malet, the English Ambassador in Berlin that, during this visit to his grandmother, she intended to make him an honorary Admiral in the British Fleet. The Emperor was wildly excited by the news, which had fulfilled one of his keenest desires, while the incidence that he should have been singled out for this honour, so soon after the termination of the "Vienna affair," clearly showed that it had paid him to snub "Uncle Bertie." "Fancy wearing the same uniform as St. Vincent and Nelson," he wrote ecstatically to the English Ambassador on June 14., 1889. "It is enough to make one giddy." The Emperor continued with an elaborate reference to *Macbeth*, comparing Sir Edward Malet to the witches who proclaimed Macbeth, Thane of both Cawdor and Glamis. Then fearing that he might have given offence by the comparison, the Emperor added an explanatory postscript to his letter. "I beg to be allowed to

remark that I do not look upon you as a witch, but more as a good fairy." It is improbable that Sir Edward had ever envisaged himself in the rôle of either a witch or a fairy.

On August 1., 1889, the Emperor William, escorted by twelve German battleships, arrived at Spithead. He was met by the Prince of Wales who accompanied him to Cowes, where he was received by the Queen and Lord Salisbury. He clearly made a good impression on his grandmother, since she wrote in her Journal: "He was very amiable, and kissed me very affectionately on both cheeks on arriving." The Prince was less pleased with his nephew who, during his visit, displayed an exaggerated and most un-English enthusiasm for the Regatta, and an irritating curiosity in British naval concerns. His frequent hints that, in the near future, his own fleet would be superior to the Queen's in scientific equipment, also got on the nerves of the Prince of Wales. The Emperor, however, thoroughly enjoyed his visit to Cowes and, on his return to Berlin, wrote the usual exuberant and embarrassing letter to his grandmother: "I am now able to feel and take interest in your Fleet as if it were my own," he began, "knowing that the British ironclads, coupled with mine and my army, are the strongest guarantees of peace. . . . But in the event of war," continued the Emperor, "may the British Fleet be seen forging ahead side by side with the German, and the

'Red Coat' marching to victory with the 'Pomeranian Grenadier.' "

Such a prospect was highly distasteful to Queen Victoria nor did she relish her grandson's gratuitous advice regarding her navy when, towards the close of 1889, he was staying in Athens for the marriage of his sister Sophie to the Duke of Sparta. The Mediterranean Squadron under the command of Admiral Sir Anthony Hoskins had escorted the *Osborne* with the Prince of Wales on board to the Piraeus, and after the Emperor had inspected the Squadron and lunched on board the Admiral's ship, he informed his uncle that he much doubted if the Mediterranean Fleet was large enough to defeat the French Navy in the eventuality of war. Not content with this provoking suggestion, the Emperor William was so alarmed by the inferiority in size of his grandmother's Fleet that he wrote to her saying that the strength of first-class battle-ships, in the Mediterranean Squadron, ought to be raised from five to twelve. "Admiral Hoskins must be reinforced," he added firmly. The next year, following an increase in the navy of the United States of America, the Emperor issued a further set of orders to the Queen: "Your Navy must now be trebled," he commanded, "to be able to meet the Mounseers and Yankees on equal terms. . . . This is the humble notion of a simple Admiral of the Fleet."

The irritating consistency of these "humble

notions" of her grandson, probably caused the Queen to resist, for some time, the request made to her by the Prince of Wales in 1894 that the Emperor William should be made a British Field Marshal. The prospect of her grandson embracing in his meddlesome activities the military as well as the naval affairs of her country, was most unpalatable to the Queen, nor was she pleased with the Prince of Wales for being willing to accept honorary rank in the German army. "This fishing for uniforms on both sides is regrettable," she wrote to Sir Henry Ponsonby and regarding the Prince's desire to make the Emperor William a Field Marshal she was adamant. "This would never do, and he is an Admiral," she wrote again to Sir Henry, adding: "The Queen thinks he (the German Emperor) is far too much spoilt already." Nevertheless, the Prince of Wales was eventually allowed to accept honorary rank in the German Dragoon Guards and the Emperor although failing, to his great annoyance, to secure a British "Baton," was made Colonel-in-Chief of the 1st. Royals. To this honour, he reacted in his customary theatrical manner and, after attending manoeuvres at Aldershot during that summer of 1894, when he rode at the head of the 1st. Royals, he wrote in raptures to the Queen: ". . . and to think I was looked upon as one of their own, belonging to 'the thin Red Line' of England too!"

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER SEVEN

“ . . . If the dear child grows up good and wise,
I shall not mind what his name is.”

QUEEN VICTORIA TO THE PRINCE OF WALES ON
JUNE 13., 1865, ON THE BIRTH OF PRINCE
GEORGE, LATER H.M. KING GEORGE V.

THE year 1817 was one of outstanding importance in the history of the House of Hanover since, on November 6th., Princess Charlotte the only child of the Regent, later King George IV., died at Claremont, after giving birth to a dead son. Her husband was Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha who, after this initial reverse in a brilliant career, was later to become the uncle of Queen Victoria and the first King of the Belgians. The death of Princess Charlotte left the Crown of England with no legitimate heir of the second generation, for although King George III. had been blessed with nine extravagant and dissolute sons, not one, with the exception of the Regent, had become the father of a legal heir to the throne.

In consequence in 1818, the people of England

were edified by the unusual spectacle of four obese and ageing royal Dukes, forced to abandon their mistresses or illegal wives, hastening to the altar of matrimony, in order to produce an heir to the English Crown. The youngest of these sons of George III., compelled to make this heavy sacrifice, was Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge, then in his forty-fifth year, who persuaded Princess Augusta of Hesse-Cassel to become his wife. Their marriage took place in Hanover and, in the following year, it was evident that the Duchess of Cambridge was with child. Also living in Hanover at that time was the Duke of Clarence, an elder brother of Cambridge, who had likewise married in 1818. When it became known, in March, 1819, that his sister-in-law was about to be delivered, Clarence insisted, out of suspicion and jealousy, that all the doors of the Duchess of Cambridge's bedroom should be sealed. Later, when he was told that she had given birth to a son, the Duke of Clarence at once entered her room and personally inspected the sex of the child.

This son was Prince George of Cambridge, who became a person of considerable importance in the history of the English Royal Family in the nineteenth century since, not only was he the first cousin of Queen Victoria, but also the uncle of Queen Mary. For two months after his birth, Prince George was the direct heir to the Crown, but the birth of a daughter,

later to become Queen Victoria, to the Duke of Kent, an elder son of George III., destroyed the slender chances of the Duke of Cambridge, or of his son, of succeeding to the throne. But it is a fact of considerable interest, that until the birth of Queen Victoria the uncle of Queen Mary was, for a brief period, the heir-apparent of the House of Hanover.

Prince George was brought up mainly at Windsor Castle by his uncle the Duke of Clarence who, in 1830, became King William IV. The King was most anxious that his nephew George should marry his niece Princess Victoria who, owing to the inability of his Queen Adelaide to rear a child, appeared certain on his death, to become the Queen of England. But neither of the young people ever favoured the suggestion which was also opposed by Leopold I., King of the Belgians, who already had decided that his niece Victoria should marry his nephew Albert. In 1837, Princess Victoria became Queen, marrying Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha three years later, as desired by her uncle Leopold, and it was towards the close of 1840, shortly before the birth of the Princess Royal, that the Duke of Cambridge fell into grave disfavour with the young Queen and her pious Consort.

In October, Prince Albert and the Duke were attending together a public dinner from which the former withdrew early, in order to return to his wife, and he asked his cousin to make his

excuses to the assembled company. This the Duke of Cambridge did in an after-dinner speech of considerable broadness of humour. "Prince Albert has recently married a very fine girl," began the Duke, "and they were somehow or other very fond of each other's society." Encouraged by loud cheers, the speaker continued: "Indeed there was not a lady or gentleman present who would not at once give him (Prince Albert) credit for the performances." This ill-expressed and bawdy reference to her forthcoming delivery horrified the Queen and her husband, and caused them to give ready, if not eager, credence to a discreditable story about Prince George of Cambridge which, in 1842, was circulating through London Society.

It had come to the ears of Queen Victoria during that year, that Lady Augusta Somerset, a daughter of the Duke of Beaufort, was with child although unmarried, and that her seducer had been Prince George. Although this accusation was denied in a letter to *The Times* by the Duke of Beaufort, the Queen forbade any of her ladies-in-waiting to speak to Lady Augusta, and she actually had the audacity to remark to her aunt, the Duchess of Gloucester: "I know that the stories are all true." Naturally the Duke of Cambridge was most indignant at his cousin's attitude towards these false charges against his son and he wrote a bitter letter of complaint to the Prince Consort. In his reply to the Duke, the Prince made a



"HE SHOWED . . . A SPARK OF ORIGINALITY IN HIS CHOICE OF
A WIFE"

DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE. C. 1890

most grudging and ungallant withdrawal. "As Prince George has given his word of honour that the story is untrue," he wrote, "I suppose that we *must believe it is so.*"

The charge against Prince George had caused wide discussion and the behaviour of the Queen and Prince Albert was, rather naturally, most unfavourably criticized. Greville even wrote that the trouble was caused by "the prudery of Albert and her (the Queen's) own love of gossip, and exceeding arrogance and heartlessness." In defence of Queen Victoria and her husband it must be remembered that as they were both at that time only twenty-three years old, they were inevitably too inexperienced to deal tactfully with such a delicate matter, but their youth cannot exonerate them from hastily giving credit to a salacious accusation against a near relative, which subsequently proved to be entirely untrue.

On the death of his father in 1850, Prince George became Duke of Cambridge, but this did not interfere with his military career to which he was much attached. He was made a Lieutenant-General in 1854 and commanded the First Division of the Eastern Army during the Crimean War. He was present at the battles of Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman, his horse being shot under him at the latter engagement. In 1856, the Duke of Cambridge became a full general and he was made Commander-in-Chief of Her Majesty's Forces. The Duke held this position for nearly

forty years, during which time he acquired a consummate skill in resisting all reforms proposed for the army and, as has been said, it was largely owing to this conservative attitude that the Government, exhausted by royal obstinacy, declined on his retirement to appoint the Duke of Connaught in his place, although the latter was most suitable for the position of Commander-in-Chief.

The Duke of Cambridge further marred his tenure of this high office when, at the age of seventy-six he fought with the greatest tenacity the decision of Lord Rosebery's Government, in 1895, that his resignation was essential to the reorganization of the army. Although Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales supported the Government in this contention, it was not until the former had written to the Duke demanding his unconditional resignation, that he reluctantly gave way with singularly bad grace. He demanded, however, from the Government a substantial pension for his long services but, as neither the Queen nor Lord Rosebery supported his claim, he was compelled to content himself with his annuity of £12,000, which he had received from the hands of a grateful country for more than fifty years. The Duke employed his enforced leisure adding to his already remarkable collection of snuff-boxes and indulging in his love of music. To play in a quartet was perhaps the Duke's favourite occupation, after drilling soldiers on

the square, and even as a man of over eighty, he would be so oblivious of time when thus engaged, that he often kept his fellow musicians from bed until two in the morning.

The Duke came from a long-lived family and his mother Augusta, Duchess of Cambridge, only died in 1889 at the age of ninety-two when her son was actually seventy, a record on which few mothers and sons in history could improve. Queen Victoria retained a sentimental regard for her venerable aunt and wrote in her Journal, on April 6th., the day of the Duchess' death: "While I was resting Beatrice came in and said there was sad news about dear Aunt Cambridge. She had passed peacefully away at half-past twelve. Very sad, though not for her. But she is the last of her generation, and I have no longer anyone above me." It was curious that the Queen herself had to wait until she was seventy, before the last relative "above her" should die.

The Duke of Cambridge who died in 1904 at the age of eighty-five, was an amiable man although of a most conventional military order. He showed, however, a spark of originality in his choice of a wife. Designed by King William IV. to be the husband of Queen Victoria, he managed nevertheless to escape any royal alliance and he married an actress, Miss Louisa Farebrother. This lady, to whom the Duke was devoted, died in 1890, having borne him several children who were given the surname of FitzGeorge. As the Duke

had contracted a morganatic marriage his title died with him, but he possessed two sisters both of whom made marriages of a more worldly nature than himself. The elder was Princess Augusta, born in 1822, who married Frederick, Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and the younger was Princess Mary Adelaide who was born in 1833 when her father, the old Duke of Cambridge, was nearly sixty.

The betrothal arrangements of this latter Princess suffered several interesting vicissitudes. When she was twenty, Napoleon III. started negotiations to secure her hand for his cousin Prince Jerome, but the general suspicion with which the upstart Emperor was regarded in the Royal Families of Europe, compelled him to abandon such an ambitious project. Three years later, Princess Mary of Cambridge received a more concrete offer of marriage from a most unexpected quarter. During the Crimean War, King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia lost his wife and, wishing to consolidate his alliance with England, he asked Queen Victoria for the hand of Princess Mary.

This offer caused considerable speculation at the Court of St. James, where it was felt that an English Queen of Sardinia would be of political value in moderating King Victor Emmanuel's bellicose attitude towards Austria. Difference of religion, however, provided an awkward barrier, the King being a Catholic and the Princess a



THE TECKS AT TEA

THE DUKE AND DUCHESS ARE ON THE LEFT, AND THE DUKE OF
CAMBRIDGE IN THE CENTRE, OF THE GROUP

Protestant, so Queen Victoria wisely resolved to leave such a vital decision in the hands of Princess Mary. After some consideration of this interesting offer, the Princess rejected it on religious grounds, an attitude which, in the Queen's opinion did "dear Mary the greatest credit." But apart from the natural disinclination to change her religion, Princess Mary was fortunate to escape the embraces of Victor Emmanuel who was a most uncouth and licentious monarch. When Queen Victoria met him for the first time in 1855 she wrote to her uncle, the King of the Belgians, that he seemed "wild and extravagant, with a very strange, short, rough manner. . . ." Indeed, the King of Sardinia appeared to the Queen to be "more like a Knight or King of the Middle Ages than anything one knows now-a-days."

After the rejection of this proposal of marriage, Princess Mary had to wait over ten years before another offer was made for her hand, except for that made by a certain peer which was not considered desirable by the Queen. Most of this time she spent at Cambridge Cottage, Kew, where she had been brought up and to which she grew to entertain no little antipathy. Then in 1865, Prince Francis of Teck proposed to her. She accepted him with the consent of the Queen.

This Prince, who was four years younger than his future wife, was the eldest son of Duke Alexander of Wurthemberg and of hismorganatic

wife Claudine, Countess of Rhedey who, after marriage, was given the title of Countess of Hohenstein. In 1863, King William of Wurtemberg had created Duke Alexander's sons "Princes of Teck," a somewhat nebulous title derived from a ducal castle in Wurtemberg, which had been destroyed four hundred years before. In 1871, the King made Prince Francis, Duke of Teck.

Although the marriage was not of that importance or brilliancy which Queen Victoria had envisaged for her favourite first cousin, she was satisfied with the qualifications of Princess Mary's fiancé. "Prince Teck sat next to me at dinner," she wrote in her Journal on April 20., 1866. "He is natural, unassuming, and good-humoured; and seems to have good sense." The Queen attended the wedding, which took place at Kew Church on June 12th. of that year.

Four children were the fruits of this very happy marriage of whom the eldest, a daughter, was born on May 26., 1867, and was christened Victoria Mary Augusta Louisa Olga Pauline Claudine Agnes. Queen Victoria, who was the chief god-mother, came to visit the future Queen Mary at Kensington Palace a little less than a month after her birth, and she wrote in her Journal on June 21st.: "At half-past five drove in the open carriage and four through the densely crowded park to Kensington Palace to see dear Mary Teck. It seemed so strange to drive into the

old courtyard and get out at the door, the very knockers of which were old friends. Franz (the Duke of Teck) received me at the door and we went up to the top of the house, and here, in the former bedroom in which Mamma and I slept, I found dear Mary, Aunt Cambridge, and the baby, a very fine one, with pretty little features and a quantity of hair." Fortunately the Queen highly approved of the appearance of Princess Victoria Mary and a year later she wrote that her god-daughter possessed "the deepest blue eyes imaginable, a tiny rosebud of a mouth, a lovely complexion (pink and white), and a most perfect figure."

The Princess was a most healthy child, as shown by the Queen's description but, in July 1868, a putrid pond outside the nursery windows, combined with a chill, brought on a most serious illness which, at one moment, caused serious alarm. But the danger passed and, on her recovery, the Princess was taken to Kew by her grandmother, the old Duchess of Cambridge, into whose company she was frequently thrown in her youth. This venerable lady delighted her granddaughter with her amusing anecdotes and her wonderful collection of jewels, of which the most romantic were the emeralds won in a German lottery which, years later, were to adorn the throat of the little Princess herself.

Besides "Grandmamma" there was also "Aunt Augusta," the elder sister, by eleven years, of

her mother, who had married in 1841 the Grank Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. This lady was a popular and frequent visitor to White Lodge in Richmond Park which, in 1869, Queen Victoria had granted to the Duke of Teck, and where most of the youth of his children was spent. The Grand Duchess, although rather shabbily dressed, also possessed some magnificent jewels, and her parure of sapphires now belongs to the Duchess of Kent.

Of the younger generation, the three most constant companions of Princess Victoria Mary were naturally her three brothers, "Dollie," "Frank" and "Alge." The former, Prince Adolphus, was born in 1868 and succeeded his father as Duke of Teck in 1900. In 1917, he was created Marquis of Cambridge and died ten years later. The second brother, Prince Francis, was born in 1870, dying in 1910, and the third, Prince Alexander, who was the first member of the Royal Family to go to Eton, was created Earl of Athlone in 1917 and is now Queen Mary's only surviving brother. Besides her brothers, there was one other little boy, two years older than herself and her second cousin once removed, with whom the Princess constantly played. He was Prince George, the second son of the Princess of Wales and, on June 3., 1873, the Princess wrote to the Duchess of Teck: "To-day is George's birthday: may your little girl come and play with him?" The future King and Queen of

England had been each other's favourite cousin from early youth.

Princess Victoria Mary was extremely fortunate in her parents, who spared themselves no pains where their children were concerned. Both the Duke and the Duchess of Teck believed that it was easier to train a family by affection than by violence of word or deed, a popular method in the mid-Victorian period, and they were in consequence deeply loved and respected by all their children. The Duchess was famed for the kindness of her heart and the charm of her personality and she was probably the most popular English Princess of her era. The Duke of Teck was a most intelligent and cultured man and he also possessed a keen sense of humour, which was once most unexpectedly tested, owing to a mistake of identity, during the anti-Russian agitation of 1877. A Hyde Park orator was declaiming, one summer afternoon of that year, against the iniquities of the Russian Government and the intrigues carried on in England by its representative, Monsieur Shuvaloff. While he was speaking, the crowd noticed that listening to this harangue was Shuvaloff himself who, on being abused, hurried away. Later the same afternoon, the crowd thought that they had caught the Russian Ambassador again listening to an agitator and this time decided to punish him for his audacity. They accordingly battered in his top-hat and had hustled him rather badly

before discovering that their victim was not Monsieur Shuvaloff at all, but the Duke of Teck. Fortunately the Duke was not seriously injured and the story of his misadventure caused much amusement at Court.

The lives led by the four children of the Duchess of Teck at Kensington Palace and White Lodge were happy but simple. Parties were rare functions, since children in the Seventies were not entertained in the lavish manner of to-day, and the Duchess considered that too much excitement was bad for the young. "There are too many grown-up children at the present day," she was wont to remark, thus echoing the complaint of parents in every age. But the simplicity of living that governed the youth of her children, was not generally cultivated by the Duchess of Teck who, having been married at the age of thirty-three to a Prince by no means a Croesus, was unable to modify her somewhat extravagant views on the value of money. She was extremely hospitable and she subscribed most generously to a large number of charities. Indeed at one time she is said to have been spending, in general, beyond the means at her disposal. It therefore became necessary, in September 1883, for the Duke and Duchess of Teck with Princess Victoria Mary and her two younger brothers to leave England for two years in order to economize, and to close their apartment in Kensington Palace, which was to remain empty for nearly



"... DROVE IN THE OPEN CARRIAGE AND FOUR ... TO KENSINGTON PALACE TO SEE DEAR MARY TECK"

*Queen Victoria in her Journal
June 1867*

DUCHESS OF TECK IN 1873

twenty years, when it was occupied by Princess Beatrice of Battenberg.

After a visit to a cousin, Princess Catherine of Wurthemberg, on the Lake of Constance, the Tecks arrived at Florence which was to be their principal home for a year and a half. There they lived on the second floor of a private hotel on the Lung-Arno, and it would appear that at first Princess Mary was home-sick for England and an apathetic sightseer, which was very natural in a girl of sixteen. The following year, 1884, the family moved from their pension to a villa outside the city called "I Cedri" (the Cedars). Here the Princess was much happier and she began to acquire her great love and knowledge of art by a thorough study of the pictures, churches and palaces of Florence. The autumn of 1884 was spent in Switzerland, the winter again in Florence and, by the summer of the following year, the Tecks were back in London and living in a house in Chester Square.

The London season of 1885 was unfortunately spoilt for Princess Victoria Mary by the sudden death of her paternal grandfather, Duke Paul of Wurthemberg, and it was not until May 1886 that she was able to make her appearance at one of Queen Victoria's rather melancholy "drawing-rooms." Owing to her birth, the Princess was not presented in the Throne-Room but in the "Closet," a small room nearby, reserved for the presentation of royalty. The next five years were

spent by the Princess in the minor duties undertaken by a young member of the Royal Family, in which she was naturally overshadowed by her popular and energetic mother, but unconsciously she was preparing herself for the great rôle she was to play in later life. She had already stirred the love and admiration of the English people and, on December 3., 1889, Queen Victoria wrote in her Journal of the Princess and her second brother Francis; "May Teck looked very pretty, and Frank is a very fine young man." Frequent visits were made abroad at this time, to St. Moritz, the Italian Lakes, Oberammergau; and once she stayed with the Duchesse de Luynes at the Château de Dampierre, where the Princess formed a lasting friendship with her daughter, who later became Duchesse de Noailles.

On December 5., 1891, Queen Victoria wrote in her Journal that, during the morning, the Duke of Clarence, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, had come to her and said: "I have some good news to tell you; I am engaged to May Teck." The Queen added the information: "This had taken place at a ball at Luton, the de Falbe's place." She then recorded her assent: "I had much wished for this marriage, thinking her so suitable." The engagement of the Duke of Clarence, the eventual heir to the throne, to Princess Victoria Mary, or Princess "May" as she was now generally called, was received with great enthusiasm in the country and with cordial

approval in royal circles. Amongst the letters of congratulations received by the Queen, was one from the Emperor William II. of Germany, who patronizingly remarked: "Sie (the Princess) gefiel mir ausnehmend gut."

But it was a tragic interlude in the life of Princess May. Only a few weeks after the engagement had been announced, the Duke of Clarence contracted a severe fever. He had been frail from youth. The wedding had been arranged for February 27., 1892, but on January 14th., Queen Victoria recorded in her Journal that she had received that day a telegram from the Prince of Wales saying: "Our darling Eddy has been taken from us. We are heart-broken." A few days later the Queen wrote of "this terrible tragedy, the like of which has not been seen since the death of Princess Charlotte in 1817."

For over a year after this sudden calamity, Princess May lived in comparative seclusion. She stayed a short time with the Duke of Devonshire at Compton Place near Eastbourne, she paid a visit to Lady Wolverton at Cannes and she spent some weeks in Wurthemberg with her relatives, before resuming her official duties in England. Then in April, 1893, while staying with the Duchess of Fife at Sheen, she received an offer of marriage from the Duke of York, the younger brother of her dead fiancé, and now the eventual heir to the throne of England. Her acceptance of his proposal fulfilled the dearest wish of Queen

Victoria and her people, and on May 3rd. the Queen could write in her Journal: "Received a telegram from Georgie from Sheen House to say he was engaged to May Teck and asked for my consent. I answered that I gladly did so. I have so much wished for this engagement." The Queen's wish had been universally shared in Great Britain since Victoria Mary, despite her foreign blood, was by unbringing and in outlook, an English Princess.

The Duke of York, to whom Princess May was now engaged, although two years older than his fiancée, actually belonged to a younger generation than the Princess since, while she, through her grandfather the old Duke of Cambridge was the great-granddaughter of King George III., the Duke of York, through his father the Prince of Wales, Queen Victoria and the Duke of Kent, was a great-great-grandson of the same sovereign. Princess May was in consequence a second cousin of her future father-in-law the Prince of Wales, and a second cousin once removed to the Duke of York. Owing to the fact that the Princess's grandfather, the Duke of Cambridge, had been nearly sixty when her mother, the Duchess of Teck, had been born, the generations of the Royal Family had become curiously awry, with the result that Princess May was only a first cousin once removed of Princess Charlotte, the daughter and heiress of King George IV., although the latter Princess



"... A VERY CHARMING GIRL WITH MUCH SENSE AND AMIABILITY
AND VERY UNFRIVOLOUS"

Queen Victoria to the Archbishop of Canterbury
July 1893

PRINCESS VICTORIA MARY OF TECK (QUEEN MARY) IN 1885

had died fifty years before Princess May was born.

The Duke of York was born on June 3., 1865, at Marlborough House. According to his grandmother, Queen Victoria, "Alix (the Princess of Wales) was again confined too soon, but this time only a month, and the child is said to be nice and plump and much larger than Albert Victor" (later Duke of Clarence). But after a personal inspection, his grandmother wrote in her Journal that the Prince was "not very pretty." This was an unusual verdict on a baby, coming from the Queen, but she kept it to herself, and it was a subject of which she rightly considered herself to be a connoisseur.

The question, as to what names should be given to his infant son, became a matter of dispute between the Prince of Wales and his mother. The Prince desired to call his second child George Frederick Ernest, but the Queen wrote to him on June 13th.: ". . . I fear I cannot admire the names you propose to give the Baby. . . . Frederick is, however, the best of the two, and I hope you will call him so; George only came over with the Hanoverian family." Undoubtedly "George" was too reminiscent in the Queen's ears of her dissolute uncle, King George IV., although the Prince hastened to remind her that the name would please the Duke of Cambridge while at the same time it had been held by England's patron Saint. The Queen also forgot

that the name of Frederick was as alien to the pre-Hanoverian Kings of England as George. But eventually she gave in, writing to her son: "However, if the dear child grows up good and wise, I shall not mind what his name is." One stipulation only she made: "Of course you will add Albert at the end, like your brothers, as you know we settled long ago that all dearest Papa's descendants should bear that name." So "Albert" was dutifully added, although the Prince of Wales had had no previous intention of doing so, and on July 8th., the *Court Circular* proclaimed that the infant Prince "had been christened in the name of George Frederick Ernest Albert," in the private chapel at Windsor by the Archbishop of Canterbury. This badly worded announcement caused a facetious ecclesiastical organ to remark that "Christian infants were usually baptised in the name of the Trinity."

Prince George and his elder brother spent most of their early youth at their parents' home, Sandringham, in Norfolk. There they were brought up on a curriculum far less exacting than that imposed on their father, and under tutors far less forbidding than the austere Mr. Birch, and others, who had dragooned and emasculated the early life of the Prince of Wales. The young Princes were reared on reason rather than on violence and, as evidence of what little part fear played in their lives, it is related that at the age of four, Prince George was guilty of some

impertinence in the presence of the Queen. When his astonished grandmother ordered him under the table as a punishment, the child instantly obeyed but, when later allowed to emerge, it was noticed that he had employed his enforced leisure in removing all his clothes. History does not, unfortunately, record the scene that followed, but it is very probable that the Queen was compelled to smile.

A tutor was appointed to educate the young Princes when they were respectively six and seven years old and, although it would not appear that the Rev. John Neale Dalton was able to inculcate his pupils with his own thirst for knowledge, both boys were willing to attend to their lessons and to accept their tutor's lenient rule. Mr. Dalton was in consequence able to report to their grandmother, on January 31., 1875, that the Princes "daily prosecute their studies with due diligence and attention." The Princess of Wales herself imparted to her sons one vital particular of their curriculum. Every morning she read to them a chapter from the Bible and it is said that Prince George continued this practice, on his own account, to the end of his life.

In 1877, the Prince of Wales decided that the best form of training for his sons would be the Royal Navy and he wished them to enter Dartmouth, as naval cadets, that year. The Queen was startled by the novelty of the proposal and, in

the place of the training-ship she suggested, for unknown reasons, Wellington College. But as the Prince of Wales was determined on the navy, his mother reluctantly agreed, noting in her Journal the conditions she had made, before giving her consent to the experiment. "Eddy would naturally not enter the Navy," she wrote, "owing to him being the heir to the throne "and Georgie only if he liked," she added. So in May 1877, the two princes passed the ordinary examination which enabled them to enter Dartmouth.

The life of naval cadets in the Seventies was rough and wild and, although the Queen insisted that Mr. Dalton should accompany her grandsons, he wisely did not interfere in their relations with the other cadets. In consequence, the future King of England was able to acquire at an early age a practical knowledge of human nature, an advantage denied to his father who had been rigorously guarded by the Prince Consort from possible contamination by his contemporaries. Prince Albert Victor and Prince George appear to have enjoyed their life at Dartmouth, being nicknamed respectively "Sprats" and "Herrings," and the latter acquired at the age of twelve a love of the sea which was to endure all his life.

The day's routine at Dartmouth began at 6 a.m. with drill on an empty stomach, in common with most Service and secular establishments for the education of young children. After breakfast,

the morning was spent in learning seamanship, science, mathematics and languages. After dinner, the boys were allowed an hour on shore under supervision and work, resumed at two o'clock, lasted until five. Games were then permitted until the last meal at seven, after which the cadets went to bed. This regular curriculum was on one occasion varied by Prince George who, in a fit of high spirits, placed two marline-spikes in the bed of the First Lieutenant. This was a particularly daring experiment on the part of the Prince since, amongst the more strenuous duties of that officer, was the chastisement of erring cadets. Suspicion for this bold deed at first rested on an innocent boy, who was about to be severely dealt with, when Prince George intervened with a full confession of his responsibility. His correction took the form of extra lessons while his colleagues enjoyed shore-leave, but it is possible that had the Prince been of a less exalted rank, his punishment would have partaken of a more corporal nature.

After two years' training at Dartmouth, the Princes were sent to sea on H.M.S. *Bacchante*, a fully-rigged cruiser corvette, a vessel which pleasantly combined the modern and the antique since in her armaments were included White-head torpedo tubes and a muzzle-loading broadside. On this ship the Princes made two world tours, in 1879 and again from 1880 to 1882, the details of which are given in a volume entitled

The Cruise of H.M.S. "Bacchante," edited by the Rev. J. N. Dalton, and dedicated to Queen Victoria, "by her affectionate and dutiful grandsons."

The first duty of the *Bacchante* was that of Guardship at Cowes, after which she proceeded to the Mediterranean and anchored off Gibraltar, where the Princes were much impressed by the semi-tropical trees and plants. Round a house they visited there, "the bougainvillea creeper with its purple flowers grows most luxuriantly," the Princes wrote, "climbing up over and hanging in festoons from all the trees around; the heliotrope also is flourishing in great bushes." It was a poetical and unusually attractive picture they painted of the Rock of Gibraltar. After a visit to Palermo, the *Bacchante* passed Santa Cruz, and the Princes noted with interest the scene of Nelson's defeat by the Spanish Fleet on July 24., 1797, a battle rarely emphasized in books of English history.

Life was hard on board the *Bacchante*. The first watch was at 4 a.m. and two hours later all the midshipmen, including the Princes, had to leave their hammocks. "Rouse out Mids," was the technical expression for this early rise. Breakfast was at a quarter to seven and cutlass or rifle drill followed an hour later. Two hours' "school" and half an hour's "sights" preceded dinner, which was followed by "seamanship" and "gun drill." Naturally there were variants to

this curriculum, such as "Gunnery and Torpedo" on Wednesdays, "Steam" on Thursdays and "Logs and watch Bills" on Fridays. At half-past seven hammocks were slung and, an hour later, lights were put out in the Midshipmen's Mess and the boys went to bed.

After the cruise in the Mediterranean, the *Bacchante* proceeded to Barbados which was reached on Christmas Day, 1879. The Princes were delighted by the crowd of small boats which greeted their arrival and contained hordes of expectant negro washerwomen. One of these ladies was already famous, having washed the linen of the Duke of Edinburgh, and she was determined to perform the same service for his two nephews. She was over six feet high and her name was Jane Ann Smith. The negresses of Barbados gave the Princes an enthusiastic reception and christened them "The Queen's piccaninnies." Trinidad was next visited where, besides enjoying the sight of a "beautiful blue moth as big as a bat," which "went flying over the Crotons with their many coloured leaves," the Princes underwent the singular experience of having their feet caressed by a tribe of aboriginal Indians, in token of their homage to Queen Victoria. Jamaica was the last port to be visited on this cruise, and the *Bacchante* returned to England in May 1880.

Her second cruise began two months later, when the course was set for South America. The

Princes had to undergo the customary ceremony of "Crossing the line" and they much enjoyed the ragging that followed. "There was ducking in all its forms and under every modification of splashing and immersion," they wrote in the diary. "There was the duck courteous, the duck oblique, the duck direct, the duck upright, the duck downright, the shower duck, and the duck and drake." The humour was hearty and clean on H.M.S. *Bacchante* which, on January 25., 1881, was suddenly ordered to proceed to Cape Town, owing to the outbreak of the first South African War.

Both Princes were most anxious to join the Naval Brigade, then in the course of formation, in order to witness some fighting on arrival at South Africa. In this wish they had the support of their father but the Queen, to the great annoyance of the Prince of Wales interfered and forbade it. "Darling Alix," she wrote to the Princess of Wales. "I am very sorry that Bertie should have been sore about the boys; but I think he must have forgotten the *arrangements* and *conditions* and *instructions* respecting their going to sea." It was naturally a waste of time for "Bertie" to be "sore." His sons were neither allowed to join the Naval Brigade nor see anything of the war, although they were recompensed, to some extent, by being taken to see the famous Zulu Chief, Cetewayo, who was kept at a farm near Cape Town. Prince George could hardly believe

it possible that the black monarch could weigh eighteen stone, which was nearly three times his own weight. He was also much astonished by the four pendulous wives of Cetewayo, who each weighed about seventeen stone.

After leaving South Africa, the *Bacchante* proceeded to Australian waters, where a still more exciting adventure awaited the young Princes. While off the west coast of that continent, their ship encountered the worst storm in the memory of any sailor aboard. The steel rudder was snapped away and the *Bacchante* was in serious danger of capsizing. For five days her position remained critical and the discomfort of the crew was intense, but eventually a jury rudder was got out and she managed to reach port. The alarmed Admiral of the Squadron was about to signal the *Bacchante* as missing.

On arrival in Australia, the Princes transferred from the *Bacchante* to the *Inconstant*, for the purpose of making a tour of the principal seaboard cities, including Melbourne and Sydney. From Australia, the Princes again aboard the *Bacchante*, a visit was paid to the Fiji Islands. Here, amongst the presentations made to the royal midshipmen, was a venerable old gentleman called Thakombau who having once been a contented cannibal had later become a pillar of low Church Christianity. The *Bacchante* then proceeded to Japan, where the Princes made such an excellent impression on the Mikado, that he

sent his private band to entertain them during dinner, although these musicians had never previously been heard outside the precincts of the Palace.

China was next reached and the Princes, on arrival at Shanghai, transferred to a house-boat and sailed up the Wusing river. They made several interesting notes in their diary about the Chinese, who referred to the steam-launch as the "inside-walkee-devil-boat," and surprised the Princes by their custom of carefully preparing their coffins during their life-times. On March 22., 1882, the *Bacchante* entered the Suez Canal and, after short visits to Cairo, Luxor and Karnak, she sailed for the Holy Land. Here the Princes visited Jerusalem, and early one morning they rode past Golgotha. "On such a morning as this Christ hung there," they wrote in their diary: "on just so-called a dawn had St. Peter warmed himself at 'the fire of coals.' 'Darkness is over the land,' for the storm clouds are still flying, and the gale is still blowing up from the sea. The heaven looks angry as it looked then; ever and again there is a gleam of sun, but the agony of the cold, cutting wind to His naked body must have been great."

Early in May, the *Bacchante* set her course for England and, on August 4., 1882, Bolt Head was sighted. The Princes wrote in their diary that: "the sight of the Devon cornfields, grass lawns, and woods sloping to the sea makes every heart



"HE HAS STILL THE SAME BRIGHT, MERRY FACE AS EVER"

*Queen Victoria in her Journal
August 1882*

PRINCE GEORGE OF WALES (LATER KING GEORGE V) IN 1886

on board beat more quickly." The following day the Princes, accompanied by their father and mother, went to Osborne House to enjoy a well-earned holiday. This cruise had given to Prince George a lifelong love of the sea and had laid the foundations of that knowledge and efficiency which later distinguished his naval career.

Other occupations now awaited Prince George of Wales for a time. Instruction preparatory to confirmation was the first, and two months after his return to England the ceremony was performed by Archbishop Tait of Canterbury at Whippingham Church near Osborne. Fortunately, the Queen much approved of the learning and appearance of her grandson, and wrote in her Journal on August 5., 1882: "Georgie is also much grown. . . . He has still the same bright merry face as ever." During the autumn, Prince George was sent to Switzerland to learn languages, as the Prince of Wales hoped that his sons would acquire his own excellent command of French and German. In this, however, the Prince was disappointed, since his younger son in particular showed no aptitude as a linguist. He never succeeded in mastering German and although he knew French well, he could never speak it with his father's fluency.

In consequence of this comparative failure of his visit to Switzerland, Prince George was glad to be allowed to return to sea in 1883, and he now hoped to make the Navy his life profession.

He was first gazetted midshipman to H.M.S. *Canada* and served on her for two years in the Atlantic. He was promoted sub-lieutenant on his nineteenth birthday and after a course in the Naval College at Greenwich where he obtained a first-class certificate in torpedo-work, seamanship and gunnery, he was made a full lieutenant. After a year on H.M.S. *Thunderer* Prince George, at his grandmother's wish, went to live with a professor at Heidelberg, although he again failed to make any substantial progress in the German language. He was therefore delighted to escape from the uncongenial atmosphere of a university town when he was appointed in succession to H.M.S. *Dreadnought* and *Thunderer*, particularly as the latter vessel was now the flagship of his uncle the Duke of Edinburgh.

In 1889, Prince George received his first command, the Torpedo Boat 79, and two years later after a gunnery course at Portsmouth, he was transferred to the Gunboat *Thrush*, on the North American station. It was related in *The Times* many years later that, owing to the size of the *Thrush*, it was impossible to carry on board a permanent Chaplain. In consequence, Prince George was often compelled to conduct Divine Service on Sundays himself, when he was wont to read part of the General Confession as follows: "We have done those things which we ought to have done, and have left undone those things which we ought not to have done."

Whether facetiousness or a slip of the tongue was responsible for that singular rendering of the General Confession, *The Times* did not hazard a guess, although that journal maintained that it was "certainly a very complimentary thing to say to the seventy-three officers and men in the little gunboat."

Prince George was now supremely happy in his new position of command, but all his bright hopes for a naval future were suddenly destroyed by the death of his brother the Duke of Clarence in 1892, since it was now clearly impossible for him as the heir to the throne to pursue an active naval career. But Prince George was extremely fortunate, and so was the country over which he was later to rule, in that he spent the first twenty-six years of his life as the younger son of the Prince of Wales. As a result he was able to acquire an experience of life and an insight into human nature, denied to the Duke of Clarence after the age of sixteen, which proved invaluable to Prince George when he succeeded to the Throne.

The engagement of the Duke of York, the title given to him by Queen Victoria on her birthday in 1892, to Princess Victoria Mary of Teck, was announced on May 6., 1893. Naturally the Duke was little known in the country, owing to his service abroad in the navy but Princess May, as has been said, was a most popular figure and the engagement was cordially approved both at

home and abroad. In view of the great sorrow and disappointment the Princess had experienced in the death of the Duke of Clarence, the news of her betrothal to his younger brother inevitably excited wide interest and sympathy. It appeared that Princess May had been destined from birth to become the Consort of an English King.

The wedding of the Duke of York and Princess Victoria Mary of Teck took place on July 6., 1893, in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace. Queen Victoria attended the ceremony and the bride was given away by her father the Duke of Teck. Princess May wore a white satin dress with a design of silver roses, shamrocks, thistles and orange flowers. It was entirely of British manufacture. Her head-dress was a small wreath of myrtle white heather and orange blossom. She wore her mother's veil. The Princess was attended by ten bridesmaids, five of whom were children. The latter were, to use the nicknames given them by the Queen: "Ena" (the Queen of Spain), "Baby B" (the Infanta Beatriz), "Sandra" (Princess Arthur of Connaught), "Patsy" (Lady Patricia Ramsay) and "Daisy" (the late Crown Princess of Sweden). Queen Victoria described in her Journal her own dress for the wedding. "My wedding lace over a light black stuff," she wrote, "and my wedding veil surmounted by a small coronet." She also mentioned the going-away dress of the Duchess of York: "white

poplin edged with gold, and a pretty little toque with roses."

After the wedding, the Duke and Duchess of York drove to Liverpool Street Station through streets which, for those days, were densely packed with spectators. But travelling facilities were rapidly improving and it was estimated that the crowds, on this occasion, were greater than those which assembled to witness the Jubilee in 1887. One accident occurred on the way to the station, which much distressed the young married couple. As the procession was about to leave St. James's Palace, Lord Tullibardine, now the eighth Duke of Atholl, was thrown from his horse and rather seriously injured. Queen Victoria consoled herself, for the fatigues of the day's ceremony, by a *tête-à-tête* dinner with the bride's "Aunt Augusta," the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg-Strelitz when, no doubt, the amiable characteristics and the brilliant prospects of the Duchess of York would be eagerly discussed by both venerable ladies.

The honeymoon was spent at York Cottage, a small house on the Sandringham estate, put at his son's disposal by the Prince of Wales. Here and at York House, St. James's, the Duke and Duchess of York spent most of the following eight years which intervened between their marriage and the death of Queen Victoria. York House was actually only a suite of rooms in St. James's Palace, which had been given that distinct

appellation, like the cottage at Sandringham, in honour of the new tenants. But objection was taken to that sensible arrangement by certain members of the earlier generations of the Royal Family. They complained that even such a distinguished tenant as the old Duke of Cumberland, before his accession as King Ernest I. to the Throne of Hanover, had been content with St. James's Palace for his London address and that he had never insisted on his apartments there being called "Cumberland House." That was admittedly true, but the detractors of the Duke of York probably forgot how the old Duke stubbornly refused to give up these apartments, even after he had become King of Hanover, although Queen Victoria wanted them for her mother the Duchess of Kent. In any case, the comparison between the conduct of the most lecherous and disliked of the Queen's uncles and her vigorous and popular grandson was neither happy nor apposite and, indeed, it might have been supposed that the young Duke had called his new London home York House with the special intention of laying the sinister ghost of his great-great-uncle.

Shortly after the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of York, Queen Victoria, in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, expressed the opinion that the latter was a "very charming girl with much sense and amiability and very unfrivolous." On the correctness of this judgment the Queen could be congratulated, as also

on the hope which was completely fulfilled, "that the young people will set an example of a steady, quiet life, which, alas, is not the fashion in these days." The sting in the last words may have been meant for an older Royal Prince than the Duke of York, and probably the Queen was consoled by the hypothesis that strong family characteristics, whether good or evil, are supposed to miss out a generation. Now in her old age, she felt profoundly satisfied that the wonderful happiness she had experienced in her own married life would be reflected in the lives of these her favourite grandchildren, the Duke and Duchess of York.

The later life and activities of the Duke of York as Prince of Wales and King of England lie outside the scope of this volume. The Jubilee and death of this beloved Sovereign are living memories to-day.

Four Generations of Our Royal Family



CHAPTER EIGHT

“Georgie’s first feeling was regret that this dear child should be born on such a sad day. I have a feeling that it may be a blessing for the dear little boy . . .”

“QUEEN VICTORIA ON THE BIRTH OF KING
GEORGE VI., DECEMBER 14., 1895

THE year following the marriage of the Duke of York, Queen Victoria was much gratified by the engagement of another of her grandchildren. This was Princess Alix of Hesse who, in April 1894, was betrothed to the Tsarevich Nicholas, the future Emperor of Russia. The Princess who was born in 1872, was the daughter of Louis, Grand Duke of Hesse-Darmstadt, and of Princess Alice the second daughter of Queen Victoria. Princess Alice had died in 1878, on exactly the same day as had her father seventeen years previously, December 14th. The Grand Duke had died two years before his daughter’s marriage. The Tsarevich, who was born in May 1868, was the elder son of the Emperor Alexander III. and of his wife Marie Feodorovna, the sister of the Princess of Wales.

As Princess Alice was her granddaughter and the Tsarevich Nicholas the nephew of her eldest son, Queen Victoria naturally regarded them both as belonging to her family.

The Tsarevich first met his future wife in 1889 when Princess Alix spent six weeks in St. Petersburg. He fell in love with her at once and eagerly hoped to make her his wife. But the prospect of the future Empress being a German was not popular at the Russian Court and it was generally hoped, particularly by his parents, that the Tsarevich would marry Princess Helen, the daughter of the Comte de Paris. In an interesting passage in his diary, the Tsarevich recorded his love for Princess Alix and this divergence of opinion as to which of these Princesses should be his wife. "My dream is to marry Alix of Hesse," he wrote in December, 1891, and in January of the following year he referred to his parents' wish. "In the course of a conversation with Mama this morning, she made a few allusions to Hélène, the daughter of the Comte de Paris, which rather put me in a strange frame of mind. Two roads seem to be opening before me. I myself want to go in one direction, while it is evident Mama wants me to choose the other. What will happen?" What actually happened would have surprised and disgusted both Princesses had they known. The Tsarevich took a mistress in the person of a dancer called Mathilde Krzesinska. With this lady he remained on intimate terms until his

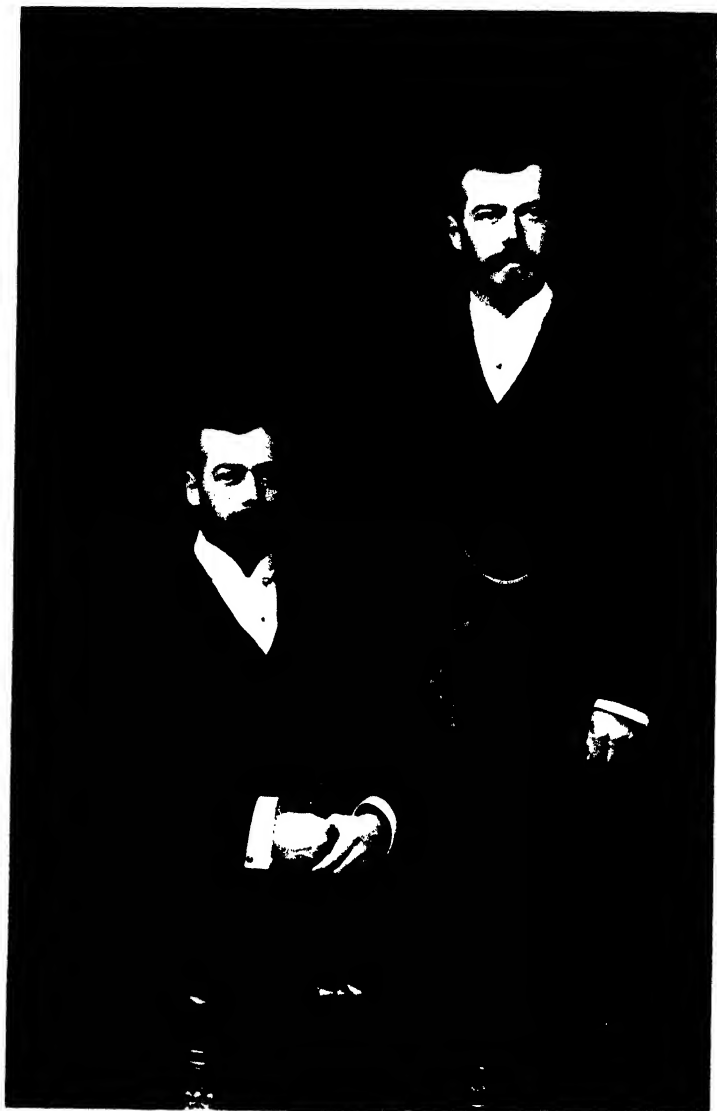
marriage, although all the time he retained his "dream" of marrying Princess Alix of Hesse. The Tsarevich had a big heart.

The scandal caused by his affair with Mademoiselle Krzesinska determined the Emperor to send his son for a long tour abroad. Egypt was first visited where it would appear from his diary, that the dancing girls were of more interest to the Tsarevich than the monuments of antiquity. "We reached Keneh at eleven o'clock. . . . We looked at some dancing-girls. Nothing worth talking about," is one extract when he was on the Nile and, on two consecutive days, he wrote as follows: "After dinner we went in great secret to see once more some dancing-girls. This time the performance was much more interesting; they undressed themselves. . . ." "We went again to see the dancing-girls, and got slightly drunk at the Luxor Hotel. . . ." After Egypt, India, Japan and China were visited. In Tokio the Tsarevich was struck on the head by a fanatical Buddhist, an incident which may have founded his intense hatred of Japan, and an entry in his diary while in India, showed that it was still fashionable for a Russian to hold Anglophobe views. "It was intolerable to find oneself again surrounded by Englishmen," he wrote, "and to see everywhere their red uniforms."

On his return to St. Petersburg, the Tsarevich found that the path had been cleared for him to marry Princess Alix of Hesse. Mathilde Krzesinska

had been paid off by his father and, since Helen of Orleans had declined to compromise where her religion was concerned, the project of marrying the French Princess had been finally abandoned. An entry in his diary, on December 21., 1891, shows, however, that there had been some risk of losing Princess Alix, and that the possibility had once arisen of her marriage with the Duke of Clarence. “. . . Since Eddy gave up the idea of marrying her (Princess Alix),” he wrote, “or was refused by her, it seems to me that the only obstacle between us is the religious question.” Anyhow, a few weeks later the Duke of Clarence died and it was understood that the Princess might be persuaded to join the Orthodox Church.

In April 1894, the Tsarevich received his father's consent to propose to Princess Alix and, that month, he went off happily to Coburg to attend the wedding of “Ducky” (Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha) and “Erny” (the Grand Duke Ernest of Hesse-Darmstadt), a function, which he knew would be attended by the Princess. On April 5th. he wrote in his diary: “My God! What a day! . . . I found Alix grown ever so much prettier . . . but she looked extremely sad. . . . We spoke . . . but without any result, as she could not bring herself to accept a change of religion.” Three days later the Princess was in a more amenable frame of mind and the Tsarevich could write in his diary: “A beautiful and unforgettable day in my life,



"HE IS CHARMING AND WONDERFULLY LIKE GEORGIE"

*Queen Victoria in her Journal
July 1893*

EMPEROR NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA AND DUKE OF YORK (LATER KING GEORGE V)
IN 1893

the day of my betrothal to my dearest and incomparable Alix. . . . I spent the whole day wrapped up in a kind of cloud. . . ." The interview between the lovers, which led to this successful conclusion, might have been carried on under somewhat embarrassing circumstances, since he added: "Wilhelm (Emperor William II.) sat in the next room, with my Uncles and Aunts, awaiting the result of our conversation." But the Tsarevich was too much in love with his handsome golden-haired Princess to be inconvenienced by his relatives and the diary continued: "I went immediately with Alix to see the Queen (Victoria) . . . where there was a long scene of tenderness, and we all kissed one another. . . . I cannot believe yet that I have a bride."

The presence of Queen Victoria in Coburg lent dignity and prestige to the wedding of her grandson, the Grand Duke Ernest, and naturally she was keenly interested in the negotiations preceding the engagement of his sister Alix to the future Emperor of Russia. The Queen highly approved of "Nicky," as she called him, and on his first visit to England in the previous year, 1893, she had written in her Journal that he was "charming and wonderfully like Georgie . . . very simple and unaffected. . . ." She was, in consequence, delighted when he became engaged to Princess Alix, although she expressed considerable surprise: "I was quite thunder-

struck," she wrote on April 20th., "as, though I knew Nicky very much wished it, I thought Alix was not sure of her mind." But now that she was, the Queen decided that a sojourn under her wing at Osborne would be an essential preliminary to their married life. So early in June, despite the grave illness of his father, the Tsarevich arrived in England. There he was blissfully happy for a month in the company of his "incomparable Alix." Shortly after his return to Russia he was compelled to go to Livadia, on the Black Sea, where his father was slowly dying from Bright's disease.

At this health resort, the Tsarevich spent a depressing month from the middle of September, 1894, while the Emperor Alexander alternately rallied and relapsed. His diary, at that time, showed a natural concern for his father's health, loneliness in the absence of Princess Alix, and a certain puerility of outlook and behaviour for a man of twenty-six at such a grave moment in his life. On September 27th. he wrote: ". . . we spent our time with Niky (the Grand Duke Nicholas, his cousin) throwing chestnuts at one another, at first in front of the house, and then on the roof." And again on September 29th.: "We played again with Niky at a chestnut battle on the roof."

On October 5th., the Tsarevich wrote in his diary: "Papa and Mama have allowed me to invite darling Alix to come here from Darmstadt,"

and, five days later, he was joyfully welcoming his fiancée at Livadia. Her arrival, however, although so ardently desired, was an added source of concern to the Tsarevich since, in addition to his father's serious illness, he was now further upset by the tender condition of Princess Alix's feet. These two anxieties mingle incongruously in his diary. On October 19th. he wrote: "Suddenly he (the Emperor) became terribly weak. . . . I went with Alix for a walk on the shore, but was afraid lest her feet might again hurt her." The following day his father died and he wrote as follows: "My God, my God, what a day! The Lord has called to himself our beloved, adored Papa! . . . Poor dear Mama! In the evening, at half past nine we had prayers in the room where he died! I feel as if I were dead myself! My darling Alix's feet have again begun to hurt her!"

Although the exigencies of Court mourning demanded that the new Emperor of Russia, Nicholas II., should not be crowned until eighteen months after the death of his father, he was determined on an immediate marriage and November 14th., the birthday of his mother, was the day chosen for the ceremony. Both the consuming passion of the Emperor for Princess Alix and the desirability of securing an heir in the direct line were urgent reasons against delay. The diary of Nicholas II. on November 14th. and 15th. is of considerable interest, both as a

chronicle of events and as an indication of the mentality of the new Emperor.

"November 14th., Monday—My wedding day. After breakfast everybody went to dress. I put on my Hussar uniform, and at half-past eleven drove with Micha (the Grand Duke Michael) to the Winter Palace. Troops were lining the entire Nevsky Prospekt, awaiting the passage of Mama with Alix. While she was being robed for the ceremony, in the Malachite drawing-room, we waited for her in the Arab room. At ten minutes past twelve the procession started for the church, whence I returned a married man. My best men were Micha, George, Cyril and Serge (all Grand Dukes of Russia). When we were back in the Malachite drawing-room, the family presented us with an immense silver swan. After Alix had changed her clothes we drove to the Kazan Cathedral. The streets were so crowded that we could hardly drive through them. When we reached Anitchkov we were met in the courtyard by a guard of honour of the Lancers of the Guard. Mama was awaiting us with bread and salt in our rooms. We all sat together during the evening, reading and replying to telegrams. We dined at eight o'clock, and went early to bed, as Alix had a bad headache.

"November 15th., Tuesday. So now I am a married man. Happily no one came to disturb us during the day, so we could go on quietly replying to telegrams. After breakfast Mama came

to see us; she was pleased with the arrangement of our rooms. We like the corner one best. We lunched at one o'clock with George who was on duty. We drove to the fortress to pray at the tomb of our dear, unforgettable Papa. The streets were again crowded. I rode my bicycle in the garden. At five o'clock the family invaded us with presents for Alix, and stayed to tea. Erny, Alix and I dined all three together. . . . We remained upstairs during the evening, and until eleven o'clock read letters from abroad."

Neither strength of character nor profundity of intellect were characteristics which predominated in the mental equipment of the Emperor Nicholas and his weak disposition, his inability to face realities and his shallow knowledge of men and affairs were indeed remarkable in a man who was educated from childhood to succeed to the most autocratic Sovereignty in Europe. His ignorance was largely the fault of his father and tutors who had regarded simplicity of upbringing as the most important item in his curriculum but, as the Emperor Frederick once remarked, "the great trouble with your Russian Grand Dukes is that, while they are brought up quite simply, they are never allowed to think themselves simple mortals." In consequence, the Emperor Nicholas was quite unprepared mentally for the tasks he was called upon to perform while, owing to the influence of the autocratic and erastian ideas he had imbibed as a youth, he

always regarded any attempted infraction of his absolute power as an act of rebellion against a divinely constituted authority.

That the Emperor was amiable to his family and courtiers and well-disposed towards his subjects was as evident as the infantine nature of the reflections which, his diaries prove, occupied his mind. Even after his accession, references to political events, unless they happened to inconvenience him, rarely occurred, while comments such as these abound: "I raced round the park on my bicycle and after dinner we drove out in an open calèche." "Before going to bed, I took a refreshing bath." "It was very hot in the train; I perspired a lot, and read a lot." But simplicity of mind and childlike reactions to important events, although desirable in the character of a contemplative, are valueless and indeed dangerous in that of an autocrat with overwhelming responsibilities. The physical resemblance between the Emperor Nicholas II. and King George V. startled their royal contemporaries, as in the case of Queen Victoria, but no two first cousins, in any station of life, could have been so dissimilar in character as these two Sovereigns.

In addition to the Emperor's natural amiability of character, he was possessed of an almost fanatical devotion to his wife. Not only was he cringingly uxorious, like many weak men, but his reliance on her judgment both in personal

and political matters, was that of an obedient and unquestioning child. This attitude towards his wife might have transformed the reign of Nicholas II., had the Empress been an intelligent woman, but she was not. On the contrary, although sharing the strong will-power of her grandmother Queen Victoria and of her aunt the Empress Frederick, she was bereft of acumen or common sense. She encouraged the Emperor, with all her influence, in his despotic notions of government and in his opposition to every proposal of constitutional reform; she zealously protected him from the company of liberal-minded politicians, and she held herself disdainfully aloof from the Russian aristocracy. In fact, the Empress was unwittingly the fundamental cause of her husband's unpopularity, which increased progressively throughout his reign with all classes in Russia. The Empress was a further source of weakness to the Emperor by her credulity and superstition where her religion was concerned, which placed her at the mercy of such rascally visionaries as the monk Rasputin. Although a most devoted and unselfish wife, she was destined to become the evil genius in the troubled life of the husband she loved so well.

The coronation took place in Moscow on May 26., 1896, and the Emperor and his wife were received everywhere with enthusiasm. But four days later the festivities were marred by a disaster which caused the death of over three

thousand people. In an open space, called the Khodinsky Field, a vast fair was about to be opened to the people at which, in honour of the coronation, food of different varieties was to be distributed free, together with silver mugs engraved with the Imperial Eagle. The crowd, in consequence, outside the entrance on the opening day was enormous and, owing to an insufficient number of police, eventually forced the gates and rushed pell-mell into the fair-ground. Those in front, flung forward by those in the rear, fell in hundreds and were trampled to death, while an even greater horror resulted from some wells which, covered up with boarding, gave way under the weight of the crowd, "carrying with them all that were passing at the moment and swallowing up those people that came after, till the whole space was filled with agonizing bodies." Thus wrote Sir Nicholas O'Connor, the English Ambassador in St. Petersburg, to Queen Victoria, and he added: "There are scenes and incidents too terrible and harrowing for the Queen's ears. . . ." This tragedy happened a short time before the Emperor was due to visit the fair, and a desperate effort was made by the authorities to conceal the dead who lay around, before his arrival. It was even said at the time that, in their zeal to find a hiding place for the corpses, the floor of the imperial pavilion was taken up and piles of dead men, women and children thrust under the boards. A short time later the Emperor

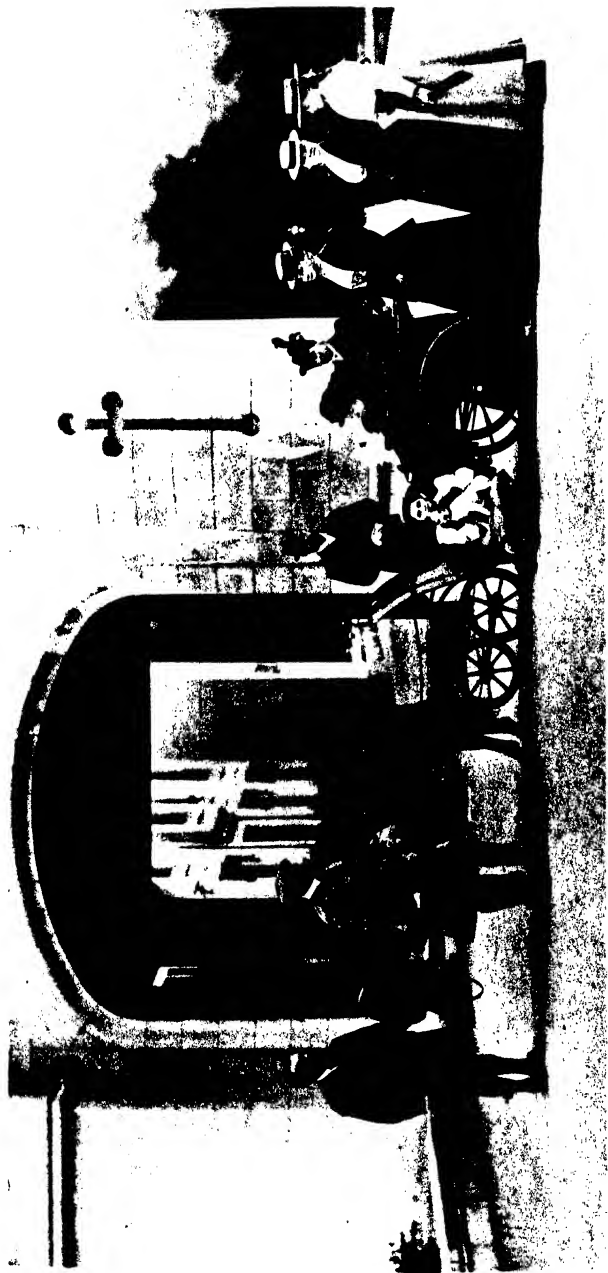
and Empress arrived with their retinue and stood above the bodies of hundreds of their unhappy subjects.

The disaster on the Khodinsky Field was an appropriate beginning to a reign of calamitous revolts and wars which ended in 1918 in a house at Ekaterinbourg with the murder of Nicholas II., his wife and children by their Communist guards. Thus ended the lives of one of the most loving and tragic couples in history, and it was typical of the Emperor's devotion to his wife that, seeing her leaning exhausted against the wall of the cellar, which was shortly to be red with their blood, he politely asked the Bolshevik Kommissar to bring the Empress a chair.

The marriage of Princess Alix of Hesse to the Emperor of Russia was the last matrimonial alliance of a descendant to delight Queen Victoria in her declining years, but the last decade of her life witnessed no diminution of her keen interest in people or politics. Of the former, her family and relatives naturally predominated in importance in her life. "Bertie" and "Alix" were her first concern, followed by "Georgie" and "May." In 1894, her interest in the latter was much increased when she became the mother of "David" (King Edward VIII.) and, in the following year of another "Bertie" (the present King). With many of her children the Queen kept in constant touch. "Beatrice" and her son "Drino" (the Marquis of Carisbrooke) lived at

home, and she often saw "Lenchen" (Princess Helena of Schleswig-Holstein) and her two sons "Christle" and "Abby." "Arthur" also lived in England and so did "Affie" until he became Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha in 1893. The latter's daughter "Missy" (Queen Marie of Roumania) and her cousin "Ducky" (Princess Victoria Melita of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha) were often mentioned in the Queen's Journal and so was "Mossy," the youngest daughter of "Vicky," who married "Fischy" (Prince Frederick of Hesse-Cassel). In "Tino," the eldest son of the King of Greece, the Queen was much interested and she always regretted that "Sandro" (Prince Alexander of Battenberg) was not the King of Bulgaria. Of the younger boys she was much concerned about "Charlie," owing to the ill-health and early death of his father the Duke of Albany. "Nicky" and "Alicky" were all that a newly-married couple should be, but the conduct of "Willy," despite the good sense of his wife "Dona," still caused alarm to the Queen.

In the early Nineties, however, the Emperor William II. was on the best of terms with his grandmother. "May you still remain the 'Nestor' or 'Sybilla' of Europe's Sovereigns, venerated and revered by all, feared only by the bad!", he wrote on her birthday in 1892 and again, a few years later, acknowledging his Christmas present: "Allow me by these lines to convey to your feet my best thanks for the pretty flower-



"... WE WERE ALL PHOTOGRAPHED BY DOWNEY BY THE NEW CINEMATOGRAPH PROCESS ..."

Queen Victoria in her Journal
September 1896

QUEEN VICTORIA IN HER PONY-CHAISE. BALMORAL 1896. EMPEROR NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA STANDS IN THE CENTRE OF THE GROUP. ON HIS LEFT STAND, IN ORDER: DUCHESS OF FIFE (LATER PRINCESS ROYAL), EMPRESS OF RUSSIA, AND DUCHESS OF CONNAUGHT

pot which graced my Christmas table." But these harmonious relations were crudely broken by the Emperor's imprudent telegram to President Kruger, congratulating him on repulsing the Jameson Raid. Although that foolhardy enterprise was undertaken without the consent of her Government, and indeed, Jameson was about to stand his trial, the Queen would not tolerate her grandson's interfering and grandiloquent telegram. So, on January 5., 1896, she wrote him a letter of reasoned reproof, concluding with a sentence which must have been exceptionally irritating to the Emperor: "I hope you will take my remarks in good part, as they are entirely dictated by my desire for your good." But this reprimand had little effect, as usual, in curbing her grandson's mistaken zeal and three years later he was writing to his uncle, the Prince of Wales, saying that in his opinion, England ought to accept her initial reverses in the Boer War in the same spirit as she had taken the recent Australian victory at cricket. The Prince answered curtly that he could not admit the analogy and, on January 27., 1899, the Queen wrote querulously in her Journal: "William's fortieth birthday, I wish he were more prudent and less impulsive at such an age!"

But the difficulties caused by her grandson were trivial compared to the recurring problem of Mr. Gladstone who, to the great disgust of the Queen, formed his last Government in 1892.

“... the G.O.M. at eighty-two is a very *alarming look-out*,” she wrote on May 30th., for once with more humour than animosity, but four months later she was nearly relieved of her unwelcome Prime Minister by an irresponsible and irreverent cow. Mrs. Gladstone, in reply to the Queen’s inquiry, wrote to her the whole story. Her husband, it appeared, had been strolling in the neighbourhood of Hawarden Castle when “a wild cow which had escaped into the woods actually rushed at him, throwing him upon his back whilst it stood over him, but he never for a moment lost his presence of mind, and, though having little breath to spare, he managed to get up and sheltered himself behind a tree, when . . . the cow, losing sight of him, walked away.” Queen Victoria was probably somewhat startled and not unamused by Mr. Gladstone’s undignified experience, but she could not have been surprised by the retribution which followed for this greatly-daring animal. “The cow has been shot,” Mrs. Gladstone informed the Queen.

Two years later, to her great relief, Mr. Gladstone resigned owing to old age and although Lord Rosebery his successor was certainly an improvement on the “G.O.M.,” he was far from being, in his Sovereign’s opinion, an ideal Prime Minister. Lord Rosebery’s hand-writing was the cause of her first complaint, and she wrote angrily on the subject to her private secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby. “. . . all drafts as well as all despatches

for abroad should be written in a good round distinct hand. . . . This went on till *within quite the last years* when indistinct and very small hand-writing . . . in very pale ink, has become the habit. . . . Unfortunately Lord Rosebery himself is the very worst offender. The Queen . . . can hardly read them at all." No doubt Sir Henry dropped the necessary hint to the "offender."

If her Prime Minister's hand-writing irritated her by its illegibility, his political views filled her with the gravest suspicions. There was, for instance, the Private Member's Bill for the payment of Members of Parliament, which was supported by Lord Rosebery and had been passed in the House of Commons. Although in the South of France at that time, the spring of 1895, she instantly wrote to her private secretary: "The Queen is horrified at the motion for payment of M.P.s being carried. Where is the money to come from?" But far worse than his support of this Bill were the Prime Minister's intentions to reform the House of Lords which the Queen regarded as little less than revolutionary. Indeed, so much did they alarm her that, for the first time in her reign, she behaved in an utterly unconstitutional manner. In a letter, marked "Very private," to Lord Salisbury, then the Leader of the Opposition, the Queen inquired: ". . . is the unionist party ready for a dissolution *now*?" Although Lord Salisbury was much surprised by the irregularity of the question, he

allowed himself to reply that, as far as it was possible to ascertain, the Unionist Party was quite ready for a General Election. Armed with this welcome information, the Queen now proposed to insist on a dissolution of Parliament, and she was only prevented from this most questionable behaviour by the united supplications of the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Salisbury and Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, who naturally realized the odium the Sovereign would incur in the country if these underhand negotiations with the Opposition became known. "Written explanations . . . might not be free from a certain risk of indiscretion," Lord Salisbury wrote nervously to the Queen.

Balked of her desire to hold a General Election, from which she hoped the Conservatives would emerge victorious, Queen Victoria sent a strong letter to Lord Rosebery in November, 1894, protesting against his provisions for reforming the House of Lords. She concluded it by saying: "Fifty-seven years ago the Constitution was delivered into her keeping, and . . . right or wrong, she had her views as to the fulfilment of that trust." Naturally Lord Rosebery was unaware of her correspondence with Lord Salisbury, but it is probable that, had it come to his ears, he would have considered that communicating with the Leader of the Opposition, with a view to the defeat of her Government, was a curious manner of fulfilling her obligations to the Constitution.

The following year, 1895, Queen Victoria realized her ambition with the resignation of the Liberals and the return of the Conservatives to office and, although she had deplored Lord Rosebery's political views, which she deemed so out of place in a man of his wealth and position, she retained for him a sincere regard for the rest of her life. When in May, 1899, from his retirement at The Durdans near Epsom, he wrote and asked her for "a tiny lock of your hair," which he wished to place in a locket he had purchased, which was surmounted by a crown, the Queen was delighted to grant Lord Rosebery's sentimental request.

Her growing Empire was naturally a great concern of Queen Victoria during the Nineties, and, in 1895, she was much gratified by a request for an audience from the Chiefs of Bechuana. In a letter to Mr. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, they had written: "It is said that the Great Queen is in Scotland, and that Scotland is far away. But the journey will be short to us if we go to see our Mother." In November the Chiefs, who were called Khama, Sebele and Bathoen, arrived in London. Before going to Balmoral, they stayed for several nights in an hotel at Finsbury, since more central and fashionable establishments were reluctant to house them. On the 19th. they arrived at Balmoral and the Queen wrote in her Journal: "The Chiefs are very tall and very black, but their hair is not

woolly. . . . They brought offerings of skins of leopards and jackals, and I gave them New Testaments and my photographs handsomely framed, and Indian shawls for their wives." These latter gifts must have proved superfluous to ladies who were accustomed to wear little round their waists and nothing above them.

Other sable potentates, outside her Empire, were anxious to honour Queen Victoria in her old age and, in 1891, the Sultan of Zanzibar on a visit to England, being concerned to observe her so dependent on her crutch-handled stick, offered to give one of his own design which, it was thought, might be profusely ornamented with jewels. Sir Henry Ponsonby having hinted to the Sultan that a jewelled stick would not be to Her Majesty's taste, the latter replied to the Sultan, through her private secretary: "The Queen would be delighted to accept a stick from the Sultan of whatever kind he chooses, she would gladly use it in remembrance of him." This letter was minuted by Sir Henry: "34½ inches. Queen much pleased."

The Emperor of Abyssinia, who had not forgotten the exploits of Lord Napier at Magdala, was also anxious to be on good terms with the Queen of England who, in return for some presents from Addis Abbaba, had sent him some horses and a pair of greyhounds. Referring to the latter in his letter of thanks, the Emperor remarked: "The dogs are very nice and wonderful runners,

for in our country we have never seen a dog that can catch a running hare." The Empress Taitou also received a dog from the Queen which, apparently, was soon overcome by the food or climate of Abyssinia. "I received the little dog Your Majesty sent me," wrote the Empress. "He was a very nice little dog, but death took him from me. I thank Your Majesty."

The respect in which Queen Victoria was held by Sovereigns as remote from England as the Emperor of Abyssinia, was further enhanced when, in 1897, she celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of her accession to the throne. The previous year, on September 23rd., she had written in her Journal: "To-day is the day on which I have reigned longer, by a year, than any English Sovereign." She was comparing the length of her reign with that of her grandfather King George III., who ruled from October 25., 1760, to January 29., 1820, while she herself had been Queen from June 20., 1837.

Many messages of congratulation reached her at Windsor on September 23rd. from home and abroad, but that which pleased her as much as any was a letter from a girl of nine living in Dumfries. "Dear Queen," it began. "I write to say how glad I am you have reigned so long. I was very much interested in the account of your dolls, as I have quite a number of my own." The Queen sent the child a signed photograph, and the letter of thanks she received in return

concluded as follows: "With love, believe me, dear Queen, your affectionate friend, Catherine M. Smith." Queen Victoria celebrated the occasion in a manner most interesting to posterity. ". . . we were all photographed by Downey by the new cinematograph process," she wrote in her Journal, "which makes moving pictures by winding off a reel of films." (Unfortunately, only fragments of this reel remain. The photographers referred to are Messrs. W. and D. Downey, who supplied the illustrations for this book.) The Queen gave a further proof at this time of her steady interest in all that was new to her, by noting in her Journal that she was now taking Hindustani lessons from her "good Abdul."

The arrangements for the service in St. Paul's Cathedral, which was to be the principal function in the celebrations of the Diamond Jubilee in 1897, caused considerable difficulties to the authorities concerned. Owing to the large crowd expected outside the Cathedral, it had been proposed that the statue of Queen Anne should be temporarily removed, in order to accommodate them more easily. When this suggestion was put to the Queen she is alleged to have replied: "If I allowed this to be done, how can I be sure that the same liberty will not be taken with statues of myself?" This proposal had, therefore, to be abandoned. Again, as the Queen, being an old lady, could not walk with ease, it had been suggested that, when her carriage should

arrive at the door of St. Paul's, the horses should be replaced by men and the Sovereign drawn in procession up the aisle. It was generally felt that the presence of horses in a Church might shock many of the congregation. However, it was eventually resolved that the Queen should not enter St. Paul's at all and that a short service should take place on the steps, after her arrival at the Cathedral.

On June 20., 1897, Queen Victoria left Buckingham Palace in an open carriage to drive to St. Paul's, surrounded by representatives from every part of her Empire. It had been decided that the Jubilee celebrations should be of a "family" nature and in consequence foreign royalties, unless they were relatives, were not invited to attend. The Queen was given a wonderful reception in the streets and on arriving at the Cathedral, a short service took place which included the singing of the *Te Deum* composed by the Prince Consort. She wore for the ceremony a dress of black silk, trimmed with panels of grey satin, and veiled with black net and steel embroideries. Her black lace bonnet was ornamented with creamy white flowers and a solitary aigrette. She carried an open sunshade of black lace. Perhaps, as she drove home through the cheering crowds, Queen Victoria may have imagined that she was making her last ceremonial appearance to her subjects, but three years later in April, 1900, she willingly undertook,

at the suggestion of her advisers, an arduous journey to Dublin, in order to thank the Irish people for their support during the Boer War.

Inevitably the misfortunes suffered by her troops in South Africa had clouded the Queen's happiness during the last two years of her life, but her courage and optimism in eventual victory never faltered, even during "Black Week" in December 1899. After a series of defeats, which included those of Lord Methuen at Magersfontein and of Sir Redvers Buller at Colenso, Mr. Arthur Balfour came to explain the situation to his Sovereign. She cut short this dismal recital of failures by remarking: "Please understand there is no one depressed in *this* house; we are not interested in the possibilities of defeat; they do not exist."

A minor reverse came to distress the Queen in May 1900. Undeterred by her tiring visit to Ireland, she proceeded to hold several "drawing-rooms" and, one evening on returning to her rooms after one of these fatiguing ceremonies, she found, "My dear little 'Bully' dead in his cage," she wrote in her Journal on May 11th. "I shall miss him very much, as I had had him for thirteen years." Perhaps in her misfortune, the Queen's memory went back sixty years to 1840, when the Prince Consort suffered a similar loss. He too, had confided his sentiments to paper and had written to his brother: "I have lost my bullfinch—it always made me happy when

the little bird sang; 'Guter Mond du gehst so still.' "

But in all her troubles during the last seven years of her life, Queen Victoria was consoled by the knowledge that a fourth generation of her family had now been born in the direct succession to the throne. Her happiness had indeed been great when, on June 23., 1894, the Duchess of York gave birth to a son at White Lodge, Richmond, who forty-one years later became Edward VIII. His great grandmother recorded the event in her Journal the same day. ". . . I received the joyful news that dear May had been safely delivered of a son, a fine strong child! What joy! What a blessing!" The problem as to what names the infant should receive at baptism, exercised the minds of the Royal Family for three days, before a decision could be reached. The Queen insisted that "Albert" should be his first name, but she was alone in that wish. The Prince of Wales not unnaturally proposed "Edward," but the Princess thought that "Christian," after her father, would be a better choice. The parents of the child wanted to perpetuate the name of "George." An unsolicited suggestion was made by the Marchioness of Waterford, a daughter of the eighth Duke of Beaufort, who wrote to Queen Victoria urging that the infant should be given the name of "David," as she had read a prophecy stating that a "King David" would one day rule

over the whole earth. Eventually all parties received satisfaction, as the Prince was called Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David. The inclusion of the names of the patron saints of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales was a happy gesture.

The christening took place in the drawing-room at White Lodge, and was attended by the Queen who wrote in her Journal on July 16., 1894: "The dear, fine baby, wearing the Honiton lace robe (made from Vicky's christening, worn by all our children and my English grand-children) was brought in by Lady Eva Greville and handed to me. I then gave him to the Archbishop and received him back. The child was very good. There was an absence of all music, which I thought a pity." The godparents, besides Queen Victoria, were the Prince's paternal and maternal grandparents, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of Teck. The Emperor and Empress of Russia also attended the ceremony, after which the Queen had tea alone with the Duchess of York in the Long Gallery. During the meal the Duchess was reminded that, in the same room, during the year 1861, "I used to sit with dearest Albert and look through dear Mama's letters." These melancholy reflections were interrupted by a request that the Sovereign should be photographed with her great-grandson on her knee, against a background formed by the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. The Queen

gladly agreed, and the well-known photograph was taken of the four generations of the royal family.

Prince Edward of York did not for long remain the only inmate of the nurseries at White Lodge and York Cottage, at Sandringham. Eighteen months after his birth, the Duchess of York was delivered of another son, and the date of his birth was rather a shock to the Queen. On December 13., 1895, she had written in her Journal: "Went to the dear sad Albert room, and lived over again in thoughts the scenes of that terribly anxious night thirty-three years ago." The following day witnessed the birth of the present King George VI. It was a strange coincidence that he should have been born on the thirty-fourth anniversary of the death of the Prince Consort. December 14th. appeared to be a day of ever-growing consequence in the Royal Family. On it, Prince Albert had died in 1861, and his daughter Princess Alice in 1878. On December 14., 1871, the Prince of Wales had made his first rally when on the verge of death, and now his grandson had been born on the same day. On the day of the birth of the second son of the Duke and Duchess of York, Queen Victoria wrote in her Journal: "This terrible anniversary returned for the thirty-fourth time . . . found telegrams from Georgie . . . saying that dear May had been safely delivered of a son. . . . Georgie's first feeling was regret that this dear

child be born on such a sad day. I have a feeling that it may be a blessing for the dear little boy. . . . I ended the day as I had begun it, by going to the dear sacred Blue Room." It must have been a great consolation to the Queen that this child who, by the coincidence of his birthday, had caused her to experience such mixed sentiments, should have received at his baptism the name of Albert.

The interest taken by Queen Victoria in the children at White Lodge was fully shared by the Prince and Princess of Wales, both of whom delighted in spoiling their grandchildren whenever they had the opportunity. The Prince, although approaching the age of sixty, was always ready to play a game of "bears" or "hide-and-seek" with Prince Edward and two charming stories, amongst many, are told of their intimacy together. The Prince of Wales once inquired from his grandson what he had been learning in English history. On being told "Perkin Warbeck," the Prince asked as to whom that person might be. "He pretended he was the son of a King, but he really wasn't," answered Prince Edward, "for he was the son of respectable parents." Another time at a luncheon party, the small Prince loudly interrupted his grandfather in the course of a serious conversation, and was quickly told to remain silent until he was addressed. Prince Edward obeyed and, when later he was given permission to speak, he remarked: "It is



FOUR KINGS AT BRAEMAR

too late now, Grandpa: it was a caterpillar on your lettuce, but you've eaten it."

Prince Edward seems to have been quite unafraid of the older generations of the Royal Family and, surprisingly enough, he entertained no more apprehension of Queen Victoria than he did of the Prince of Wales. This fearlessness delighted his great-grandmother, of whom most children were wont to stand in awe, and on September 18., 1896, she fondly described in her Journal Prince Edward's antics at luncheon. "David is a most attractive little boy, and so forward and clever," she wrote. "He always tries at luncheon time to pull me out of my chair saying, 'Get up, Gangan,' and then to one of the Indian servants, 'Man pull it,' which makes us laugh very much." Four years later, further evidence of her deep affection for the child is found in the Queen's Journal. Now four years old, Prince Edward was staying with his great-grandmother at Balmoral, and she wrote of him on October 2., 1898: "Dear little David appeared for the first time in a kilt I gave him, of which he is very proud, and in which he looks charming."

When Prince Edward was six, this delightful friendship ended. On January 6., 1901, Queen Victoria made the last entry in that Journal which she had kept for nearly seventy years. "At five had a short service in the drawing-room," she wrote that day from Osborne, "only the

choir boys sang and Beatrice accompanied on the harmonium. . . . Had my supper of Bengers' food which is very soothing and nourishing. . . ."

Queen Victoria died eighteen days later on January 22nd., at half past six in the evening.

The Queen was dead, but the happy relations which existed between this old lady in her late seventies, the most revered and venerable figure in Europe, and her great-grandsons, was a source of inspiration to the British people, who felt they possessed in Queen Victoria and the Royal Children, the living symbols of two deep sentiments; gratitude for the past and faith in the future.

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